Labour Immigration into Assam, report

1896 to 1905

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

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REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

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1897.

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SHILLONG:

PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ASSAM
SECRETARIAT PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

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Published under the direction of Colonel H. H. Thuillier, R.E., Surveyor General of India,
Engraved at the Survey of India Office, Calcutta.
1891.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR 1896.

CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION.

THIS report deals only with the immigration of labourers to Assam for employment on tea estates, on coal mines in Upper Assam, and on a few saw-mills. No statistics are available of the immigration of labourers who come to the province for work under the Public Works Department or on the Assam-Bengal Railway during the cold weather. The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara, however, reports as follows :

I estimated that not less than 7,000 free coolies went up to Nowgong and Gauhati in large batches between September and February to work under contractors on the new railway line commencing from Gauhati, and more than 200 are employed in the district of Goalpara. Besides these, a large number of other free coolies came through in search of work in the Public Works Department. These were mostly from Behar, Tirhoot, the North-West Provinces, and Oudh. They generally come in large batches by mail boats, railways and trunk roads, at their own expense, and go back to their homes as the rains commence, while some remain in Assam.

2. The following table shows the immigration of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past two years and in 1890 :

Provincial figures of immigration.

Class of labourers.	1890.	1895.	1896.	Increase or decrease compared with 1895.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
Act ... Sardari adults ...	7,291	8,968	10,460	+1,472	+16·3
Act ... Contractors' adults ...	10,082	21,847	18,870	−2,977	−13·6
Non-Act adults	8,832	25,666	31,971	+6,305	+24·5
Total of Act and non-Act adults	26,205	56,501	61,301	+4,800	+ 8·4
Children	9,875	16,336	19,814	+3,478	+21·2
Grand total	36,080	72,837	81,115	+8,278	+11·3

In this table, and in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter, except paragraph 8, the expression "Act adults" includes those immigrants who proceed to Dhubri without any contract, and enter into contracts there under section 112A of Act I of 1882. The number of immigrants into the province was more than 11 per cent. greater than in the previous year, which is a remarkable circumstance, when it is remembered that the number of immigrants in 1895 was far in excess of that in any previous year, and was more than double that in 1890. It is satisfactory to notice that the steady decrease during the previous four years in the number of labourers imported through the agency of garden sardárs has received a check, and that there has instead been a reduction in the number of labourers obtained through contractors. The increase in the number of *sardári* immigrants was accompanied by a large increase in the number of children who came to the province.

3. The following table compares the statistics of immigration during the past two years for each division and tea district of the province :

District and Valley statistics of immigration.

District,	Act adults.			Non-Act adults.			Total of Act and non-Act adults.			Children.			Grand total, including children.		
	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar ...	2,402	1,372	−42·88	7,884	8,494	+ 7·74	10,286	9,866	− 4·06	1,062	1,782	+67·79	11,348	11,648	+ 2·66
Sylhet ...	4,850	2,117	−56·35	13,731	16,594	+ 20·84	18,581	18,641	+ ·32	7,760	8,442	+ 8·78	26,450	27,083	+ 2·39
Total Surma Valley	7,252	3,489	−51·89	21,615	25,088	+ 15·75	28,867	28,507	− 1·24	8,931	10,224	+14·47	37,798	38,731	+ 2·47
Kamrup ...	156	126	+17·33	37	61	+64·86	193	237	+22·73	53	100	+88·68	246	337	+40·41
Darrang ...	3,502	6,477	+15·08	448	1,100	+145·53	6,038	7,577	+25·48	1,885	2,606	+38·22	7,923	10,183	+28·53
Nowgong ...	1,880	2,256	+22·12	177	217	+26·00	2,057	2,513	+22·52	489	738	+50·88	2,546	3,251	+27·69
Sibsagar ...	7,298	8,396	+13·81	1,027	1,015	+47·64	8,595	10,221	+18·91	2,326	3,376	+33·93	11,121	13,597	+22·26
Lakhimpur ...	8,666	8,586	− ·92	2,100	3,660	+74·28	10,766	12,246	+13·75	2,452	2,770	+12·96	13,217	15,016	+13·61
Total Assam Valley	21,583	25,841	+ 9·57	4,053	6,033	+7·155	27,639	32,704	+18·05	7,401	9,590	+29·70	35,041	42,384	+20·95
Grand total ...	30,835	29,330	− 4·88	25,668	31,071	+21·06	56,506	61,201	+ 8·49	16,332	19,814	+21·28	72,837	81,115	+11·36

The volume of immigration to the Surma Valley was much the same in the two years, and the Assam Valley obtained the whole of the net increase in the number of adult immigrants. In the Surma Valley there was a large decrease in the number of Act immigrants and the net increase over the figures of 1895 in the total number of immigrants was made up of non-Act adults and children. The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, commenting on this, remarks :

> The decrease in the recruitment of Act coolies may be attributed (*a*) to the fact that there was an abnormal increase in the number of immigrants in 1895, as compared with previous years, which left most gardens well supplied with labour, (*b*) to the ease with which coolies, willing to proceed to the tea gardens, could be obtained, rendering contracts unnecessary, (*c*) to the more careful selection of coolies brought up on contract. The increase in the number of non-Act immigrants is due to the scarcity prevailing in the recruiting districts, which led large numbers of the poorer classes to emigrate to Assam. This influx has been somewhat in excess of the demand in the case of some of the more popular gardens. The increased number of children shows that more family immigration is taking place.

In explanation of the net increase in the number of immigrants, he adds :

> The increase is due to various causes :
> (1) The process of extension of old gardens and the opening of new ones.
> (2) The facility for recruitment in the tracts most affected by the scarcity and high prices, *i.e.*, the North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces.
> (3) The opening of the Assam-Bengal Railway and other improved means of communication, which have served to lessen the distance between Sylhet and the recruiting districts.
> (4) The growing conviction that the larger the labour force of a garden is, the healthier it is : unless coolies get plenty of leave they are likely to become sick.

The scarcity prevailing in the recruiting districts was probably the chief factor in maintaining the number of importations at the high level reached in 1895.

In the Assam Valley also, though the number of Act immigrants was larger than in 1895, the proportionate increase was much less than among non-Act adults and children. Deputy Commissioners are unanimous in ascribing the large influx of immigrants to the prevalence of scarcity and famine in the recruiting districts. A still larger increase, due to the same cause, has occurred during the current year.

4. The nationality of the adult immigrants, and the agency by which Act immigrants were recruited are shown in the following statement :

Nationality of immigrants.

Nationality of immigrants.			Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
			Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
			1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas	Men	2,016	2,364	4,660	3,283	3,098	3,664	10,612	9,311
		Women	2,373	1,888	3,810	2,915	1,564	1,988	7,747	6,791
		Total	4,389	4,252	8,470	6,318	4,662	5,652	18,359	16,122
	Behar	Men	403	406	1,126	507	1,601	1,962	3,133	1,975
		Women	337	286	801	311	510	852	1,637	1,449
		Total	740	692	1,927	818	2,111	1,814	4,770	3,424
	Bengal *Proper* and Orissa ...	Men	403	367	1,301	1,195	1,667	814	3,171	2,376
		Women	336	309	1,099	1,630	818	954	3,253	3,393
		Total	739	676	2,300	2,824	2,485	1,768	5,424	4,679

Nationality of immigrants.		* Act,				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
		1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	Men	514	733	2,732	3,048	8,004	7,868	10,767	9,716
	Women	288	474	1,535	834	6,367	8,101	8,190	9,409
	Total	802	1,207	3,274	1,322	14,371	15,969	18,957	19,125
Central Provinces	Men	727	2,063	3,070	3,767	2,331	3,514	5,728	9,416
	Women	301	1,109	1,001	3,631	452	2,819	2,784	7,869
	Total	1,028	3,172	5,071	7,400	2,783	6,413	7,932	17,285
Madras	Men	182	127	200	94	238	116	620	337
	Women	134	82	141	31	74	78	349	231
	Total	316	209	341	165	312	194	969	568
Bombay	Men	..	17	9	4	3	14	12	35
	Women	..	6	3	..	..	10	3	16
	Total	..	23	12	4	3	24	15	51
Nepal	Men	11	18	2	..	29	12	42	30
	Women	3	1	..	1	..	5	3	7
	Total	14	19	2	1	29	17	45	37
Assam	Men	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
	Women	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Total	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Total	Men	1,236	2,958	12,447	10,948	15,841	17,154	33,595	32,107
	Women	3,772	1,465	9,400	8,823	6,824	14,617	22,996	28,104
Grand total		8,988	10,460	21,847	18,870	25,666	31,971	56,591	61,301

There has been an extraordinary increase in the number of immigrants from the Central Provinces. The Act was extended to those provinces in 1893, in which year they supplied only 896 immigrants; in 1894 the number was 2,014, and in 1895 it had risen to 7,932, while in the year under report it amounted to 17,285, or more than that from any other recruiting ground except the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. A satisfactory feature of this development is that, while in the earlier stages the great majority of the coolies emigrating from the Central Provinces were recruited by contractors and were sent up under Act contracts, last year less than half of them were sent up by contractors, and no less than 6,413 came into the province without any contracts under the Act. This seems to show that the earlier immigrants are being sent back to their country in the capacity of sardárs, and that the accounts they are able to give of tea-garden life in Assam are sufficiently attractive to induce large numbers of their friends and relatives to emigrate to this Province.

The North-Western Provinces and Oudh again supplied more coolies than any other province. The recent development of immigration from these provinces also is remarkable. Coolies have come to Assam, more particularly to the Surma Valley, from the North-Western Provinces for many years, but their number was small in comparison with that, for instance, of coolies from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas, and, during the three years 1892-1894, 17,860 adults were on an average imported annually from the latter areas, while an average of only 7,446 came from the North-Western Provinces. In 1895, there was a sudden and large increase in the number of North-Western Provinces immigrants, no less than 18,957 adults having been imported, against only 18,369 from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. In the Report for 1895, the Chief Commissioner commented on these results as follows:

> This increased importation of North-Western Provinces coolies is a matter requiring close attention. As stated by the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, there are certain localities which are unfit for the residence of natives of the North-Western Provinces, and the importation of such persons to gardens in these localities should be discouraged as much as possible. It will be seen later on in this report that in many cases where action, in respect of unhealthy gardens, has been taken under section 132 of the Act, that action has been to close the garden to coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

In view of the scarcity prevalent in those provinces throughout the year, a further large increase in the number of such coolies might have been anticipated, but the actual increase was nominal. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet reports that planters in his district are beginning to recognise that these coolies do not thrive in some localities, and it may be expected that this fact and the action which has been taken by this Administration during the last two years in the direction of closing to Act coolies of this nationality gardens which are unsuited to their constitution, will cause a reduction in future years in the number recruited for such gardens. More than 83 per cent., however, of these coolies are brought up outside the provisions of the Act.

5. The proportion of women to the total number of adult immigrants from the principal areas of recruitment is shown below:

Female immigrants.

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to total adult immigrants among							
	Sardári immigrants.		Contractors' immigrants.		Non-Act immigrants.		All adult immigrants.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	44·8	45·4	45·4	46·4	33·5	35·1	42·2	42·2
Behar ... ,, ...	45·5	41·3	41·5	38·0	24·4	44·5	34·5	42·3
Bengal Proper and Orissa	45·4	45·7	47·8	46·5	34·3	53·9	41·5	49·2
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	35·5	39·7	40·6	43·2	44·3	50·6	43·3	49·2
Central Provinces	27·9	40·5	39·4	49·0	27·0	44·1	35·1	45·5

There was a great advance in the proportion of women to men imported. The immigrants from Bengal Proper and Orissa, and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, included almost equal numbers of men and women, and women formed a very much larger proportion of the total number of immigrants from Behar and the Central Provinces than in the previous year, when the harvests were good, and the number of families who emigrated was consequently small. In 1896 scarcity was prevalent everywhere in the recruiting provinces, with the result that more families have been induced to leave their homes to try and better their lot in Assam.

Extent to which Act labourers were recruited by contractors and garden sardárs.

6. The following table shows the number of Act labourers imported during the past two years into each district and division of the province through sardárs and contractors, respectively, and the average number imported by each sardár:

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardárs.		Number of *sardári* coolies imported.		Average number of recruits per sardár.		Number of contractors' coolies imported.		Percentage of increase or decrease of importations of Act labourers during 1896, as compared with 1895.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	Sardárí.	Contractors'.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	682	321	1,153	453	1·6	1·4	1,249	919	−60·7	−26·4
Sylhet	704*	493	894	530	1·2	1·0	3,956	1,587	−40·7	−59·8
Total Surma Valley	1,386	814	2,047	983	1·4	1·2	5,205	2,506	−51·9	−51·8
Kamrup	11	6	66	96	5·6	16·0	88	80	+54·8	− 9·0
Darrang	704	938	1,626	2,928	2·3	3·1	3,964	3,549	+80·0	−10·4
Nowgong	193	265	329	465	1·7	1·7	1,551	1,831	+41·3	+18·0
Sibsagar	1,725	1,727	2,868	3,273	1·6	1·8	4,490	5,033	+16·5	+12·0
Lakhimpur	1,298	1,484	2,116	2,715	1·6	1·8	6,349	5,871	+28·3	−10·3
Total Brahmaputra Valley	3,931	4,420	6,941	9,477	1·8	2·1	16,642	16,364	+36·5	− 1·6
Grand total	5,317	5,234	8,988	10,460	1·7	2·0	21,847	18,870	+16·3	−13·6

* Out of this number, 8 licenses were cancelled afterwards at the request of the employers.

The figures in this statement are not of much value, so far as they relate to the Surma Valley districts, because the number of coolies imported under the Act for gardens in those districts is small compared with the number of non-Act immigrants, and no inferences regarding the relative degree of success attained by sardárs and contractors applicable to recruiting generally can therefore be drawn from the figures relating to Act importations only. So far as the figures go, it appears that only 814 sardárs were sent from Cachar and Sylhet to recruit under the Act, as compared with 1,386 in 1895. The reduction in the number of sardárs is probably due to the fact that a greater number than usual were sent to recruit outside the Act, in view of the scarcity in the recruiting districts and the consequent ease with which it was anticipated that labour would be obtainable. The sardárs working under the Act returned with an average of only 1·4 recruits each, compared with 1·4 *in* 1895, but it is believed that many sardárs sent down with licenses under the Act engage recruits *outside* its provisions. In any case the number of Act coolies imported *through* contractors showed a very much greater falling off than the number brought up by garden sardárs.

In the Assam Valley, 9,477 coolies were imported by sardárs, against 6,941 in 1895, and, though 4,420 certificates were granted, against only 3,931 in the previous year, the average number of recruits per sardár rose from 1·8 to 2·1. Contractors, on the other hand, supplied only 16,364 immigrants, against 16,642 in 1895. *Sardári* recruitment for the Assam Valley was, therefore, more successful in 1896 than in the previous year, though rather less so than in 1894. It is universally admitted that

coolies sent up by garden sardárs are in every way more satisfactory than those recruited by the agency of contractors and that malpractices by sardárs are far less common than amongst professional recruiters. The labour commission appointed in Bengal in 1895 recommended that recruiting by garden sardárs should be encouraged as much as possible, and one of the chief merits of the Central Recruiting Agency scheme, to which further reference will be made below, is that it proceeds on the assumption that every facility and encouragement is to be given to this form of recruitment.

Medical examination of *sardári* immigrants.

7. The following figures show the number of sardárs' certificates issued in the several districts, which provided under section 70 of the Act for the medical examination of labourers prior to engagement, and the proportion of such certificates to the total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardárs during the past two years:

District.	Number of certificates which provided for the medical examination of labourers.		Percentage of such certificates to total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardárs.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
Cachar	344	150	50·4	46·7
Sylhet	216	194	30·6	39·3
Kamrup	...	...	...	...
Darrang	443	667	62·9	72·1
Nowgong	191	245	98·9	92·4
Sibsagar	1,082	1,412	62·7	81·7
Lakhimpur	653	827	50·3	55·7
Total	2,929	3,495	55·1	66·7

The percentage of certificates providing for the medical examination of recruits prior to engagement has risen steadily since 1891, when it was only 39, and there seems reason to hope that in the near future very few *sardári* recruits will be engaged save after medical examination as to their fitness to labour on a tea-garden in Assam, even if such examination is not made compulsory by law, as proposed in paragraph 14 below. In the Habiganj subdivision of the Sylhet district the percentage was only 1·48, which seems to point to the provisions of the law not being clearly understood, and the Deputy Commissioner will be requested to explain to the employers of imported labour in that subdivision the facilities afforded by the Act for the medical examination of intending immigrants and the advantage they would derive from the safeguard thus afforded against the importation of sickly labourers.

Statistics of free or assisted emigration.

8. The statement below shows separately the following classes of adult immigrants: (1) those recruited through contractors under Chapter III of the Act; (2) those recruited through garden-sardárs under Chapter IV of the Act; (3) those who entered into contracts under the Act at Dhubri; (4) those who entered into contracts under the Act in the actual labour districts; and (5) those who after arrival in the labour districts were employed as free labourers, *i.e.*, who were not placed on contract under the Act:

District.	Act immigrants.			Free (non-Act) immigrants subsequently employed as Act labourers.			Free (non-Act) immigrants employed as free (non-Act) labourers and their dependents.			Grand total.
	Contracted in recruiting districts.									
	Under Chapter III of Act.	Under Chapter IV of Act.	Total.	Contracted at Dhubri.	Contracted in actual labour district.	Total.	Adults.	Children.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	919	453	1,372	...	855	855	7,639	1,782	9,421	11,648
Sylhet	1,587	530	2,117	...	5,744	5,744	10,780	8,442	19,222	27,083
Total Surma Valley ...	2,506	983	3,489	..	6,599	6,599	18,419	10,224	28,643	38,731
Kamrup	70	29	99	77	...	77	61	100	161	337
Darrang	1,715	1,337	3,052	3,425	...	3,425	1,100	2,606	3,706	10,184
Nowgong	1,104	136	1,240	1,036	..	1,059	217	738	955	3,254
Sibsagar	1,653	1,395	3,018	5,288	378	5,666	1,537*	3,376	4,913	13,597
Lakhimpur	4,057	1,396	5,453	3,133	100	3,233	3,560	2,770	6,330	15,016
Total Assam Valley ...	8,599	4,263	12,862	12,979	478	13,457	6,475	9,590	16,065	42,384
Grand total ...	11,105	5,246	16,351	12,979	7,077	20,056	24,894	19,814	44,708	81,115
Total of 1895 ...	16,128	7,013	23,141	7,694	6,437	14,131	19,229	16,336	35,565	72,837

As remarked last year, in spite of efforts made to obtain accuracy in this statement, the statistics contained in it do not agree in all cases with those given in other portions of this Report. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet explains that the figures in column 6 for his district represent the total number of contracts executed in the district under sections 111 and 112 of the Act during the year, and that those in column 8 were obtained by deducting the figures in column 6 from the total number of free adult immigrants. The same method seems to have been followed in Cachar. The error of this procedure lies in the assumption that all local contracts under the Act are executed by newly imported coolies. A reference, however, to the table given in paragraph 41 of the Report shows that of the 6,599 local contracts executed in Sylhet and Cachar in 1896, 3,608 were executed by time-expired labourers, 924 by coolies locally obtained, and only 2,065 by newly imported coolies. The attention of the Deputy Commissioners will be drawn to this point.

Cost of importation.

9. It was stated in the Report for 1895 that, owing to the constantly growing competition for labour, unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in the supply, the cost of importation had been steadily rising, and the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong reported that the expense of transporting labour to his district had in some cases amounted to as much as Rs. 155 per head. The rise in cost, though considerable in the case of sardári coolies, owing to the small number recruited by each sardár, was most marked in the case of contractors' coolies, the contractors and the host of middlemen working with them being enabled by the great demand to charge fancy prices for their services in inducing labourers to emigrate. In 1896, owing to the scarcity which prevailed in the recruiting districts, greater success attended the operations of garden sardárs, and the demand for contractors' coolies was much reduced, with the result that in most districts the cost of importation of such coolies fell very considerably. Many planters have taken the opportunity to stock their gardens with an ample labour force, and in the current year also, the number of immigrants to gardens has been exceptionally large. It is thus probable that for several years to come the demand for new coolies will be less active than it has been of late, and, so long as this is the case, it is not likely that the cost of importation will rise as high as it did in 1895. But in the ordinary course of things it cannot be expected that the relief will be more than temporary, and it may be anticipated that the cost of importation will tend again to increase as new extensions of tea cultivation take place.

Central Recruiting Agency.

10. In order to correct malpractices in recruitment and also to reduce the cost of importation, steps have recently been taken to establish a Central Recruiting Agency for the supply of labour to the whole tea industry in Assam. The question whether the establishment of such an agency was possible was one of the points referred by Sir Charles Elliott to the Bengal Labour Commission in 1895. The Commission reported that no workable scheme had at that time been evolved, but the representatives of the tea industry in Calcutta have since given much attention to the subject, and a scheme has now been elaborated, which is likely to obtain very general support, and gives great promise of success. It is proposed that *sardári* recruiting should come under the control of the Agency. A close time will be fixed for *arkattis*, for the benefit of *sardári* recruiting, and the idea of seeking special legislation to render the scheme binding by penal enactment has, for the present at all events, been abandoned. Mr. Cotton has taken much interest in the matter, and he believes, to quote Sir Patrick Playfair's words, that the scheme is calculated to provide labour "at a more reasonable cost with greater certainty and dissociated from abuses, and that if it should succeed it is almost impossible to overestimate its ultimate usefulness to the tea industry." He is prepared on behalf of the Assam Administration to give it all the moral support in his power.

Transit of immigrants to the Assam Valley *viâ* Dhubri.

11. It appears from the report furnished by the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara that 22,887 immigrants started from the recruiting districts for the Assam Valley *viâ* Dhubri, compared with only 13,104 in 1895 and 21,425 in 1894. The increase is probably attributable to the fact that two new railway routes have been sanctioned—(*a*) Khana junction *viâ* Sahebganj and Katihar to Jatrapur, and (*b*) Lakhisarai *viâ* Sahebganj and Katihar to Jatrapur—and that coolies travelling by these routes do not pass through the central stations in Bengal at which contracts can be entered into. The casualties *en route to* Dhubri were less in proportion to the total number of immigrants concerned than in 1895; they numbered 236, against 177 in the previous year, but they included 66 deaths, 67 desertions, and 103 detentions by sickness, as compared with only 9 deaths, 74 desertions, and 94 detentions by sickness in 1895. The large increase in the mortality *en route* was due entirely to the prevalence of cholera. Of the 22,671 souls who arrived in Dhubri (including 20 who arrived on the last day of 1895), 15,311 travelled *viâ* Goalundo and 7,340 *viâ* Kaunia and Jatrapur; in 1895 only 2, 60 immigrants travelled *viâ* Kaunia and Jatrapur. None of the coolies who passed through the Dhubri depôts

we·e recruited by licensed contractors. For six or seven years past, all such coolies have been despatched direct from Goalundo to the labour districts, without being landed at Dhubri. Of those who passed through the depôts, 1,873, against 145 in 1895, were *sardári* coolies with their dependents, who had been recruited by sardars licensed under the Act, and placed under contract in the recruiting districts. The remainder were free or assisted coolies, and consisted of 643 adults and dependents, who were to be forwarded on to the labour districts without contracts, and 20,135 adults and dependents who were to be placed under contract at Dhubri or sent up as dependents of those so placed under contract. In all, 12,996 of the 13,422 adults brought up to be placed under contract at Dhubri executed contracts at that place: of these only one was recruited by a licensed garden sardár, against *nil* in 1895; 5,903 were recruited by unlicensed garden sardárs, against 2,877; and 7,518 by contractors, against 6,783 in 1895.

The system of contracting at Dhubri was an unforeseen result of Act I of 1882, which included Goalpara amongst the labour districts. It has always been supported by the Assam Administration on the ground of the encouragement which it was supposed to afford to recruiting, and it was expressly legalised by Act VII of 1893. Mr. Cotton, however, thinks it objectionable on many grounds to place a coolie on contract at such a distance from his home, and he believes that the intrinsic popularity of Dhubri as a contracting station has been much overstated. The sudden development of the Dhubri system after the passing of Act I of 1882 seems to have been due chiefly to the fact that when the daily mail steamer service was started, soon after the Act was passed, the terminus was at Dhubri, and the place was therefore a convenient one for collecting coolies and placing them under contract before they embarked on the mail steamers. The daily steamer service has since been extended to Goalundo, with the result that the advantage of embarking coolies direct from that place has robbed Dhubri of much of its popularity, and the number of coolies landed there to be placed under contract has decreased steadily. The slight increase in the past year is due, as already explained, to the opening of two new railway routes, which do not pass through Goalundo or any of the large centres at which contracts are at present usually entered into in Bengal.

Medical rejections at Dhubri.

12. The Civil Surgeon of Dhubri, or, in his absence, his assistant, rejected 426, or 3·2 per cent., of the 13,422 persons whom it was proposed to place under contract at Dhubri. In 1895, 835 persons or 8·6 per cent., were rejected out of 9,660. The diminished proportion of rejections is due to the change in procedure described in paragraph 9 of last year's Report. Formerly, under an executive order of Sir Charles Elliott, the Civil Surgeon examined all coolies brought up for the execution of contracts at Dhubri not only as to their fitness to travel to, but also as to their fitness to labour and reside in, a labour district, and none rejected as unfit in these respects were allowed to be placed under contract. It was pointed out, however, in 1895 that this was contrary to the intentions and provisions of the law, which confines the compulsory medical examination to the question of the fitness of the coolie to travel to his destination, and imposes on the employer the responsibility for seeing that the labourers he imports are fit to labour in, and reside on, his estate. It was therefore ordered that immigrants, who land at Dhubri in order to enter into contracts under the Act, should be medically examined merely with reference to their fitness to travel to the labour districts, unless the employer specially requests that they may be examined also with reference to their fitness to labour and reside in a labour district.

13. In their Resolution on the Report for 1895, the Government of India requested to be informed whether, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, this change in procedure has been beneficial or not. The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara has not discussed the matter in his report for 1896, but the Chief Commissioner has recently made special enquiries into the question. It appears that Act I of 1882 was intended to effect a real change in respect of the medical examination of intending emigrants. Under Act VII (B.C.) of 1873 the law provided expressly that no emigrant should be allowed to proceed to the tea districts who was not fit to labour therein. Many complaints, however, were made by employers of the incompleteness of the examination made, and it was suggested by Sir Steuart Bayley, who was then Chief Commissioner of Assam, that the best remedy would be a division of responsibility, the Government being made responsible for the fitness of the emigrant to travel, and the employer for his fitness to labour. This principle was in accordance with the general policy of removing restrictions on emigration, and it was eventually accepted by the Government of India and became law. Sir Charles Elliott in 1882 took exception to this principle. He pointed out how great a hardship it was for coolies to be induced to take the long journey to Assam and then to be returned as unfit for labour, and also for tea planters to have to pay the cost of the journey, together with the contractor's commission and other charges, and then, instead of securing the labour they hope for, to be called on to disburse three months' pay to cover the

cost of the coolie's return. He, therefore, issued the order, above referred to, that in certifying a person to be fit to travel, the Civil Surgeon of Dhubri should bear in mind that the travelling was to eventuate in working as a coolie, and he suggested to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal that similar instructions should be issued to the Superintendent of Emigration in that Province. Sir Rivers Thompson, who was then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, expressed his inability to pass orders which appeared to him to be inconsistent with the intention of the Government of India, that no responsibility should rest on the registering or examining officers of Government (save in the case mentioned in section 71 of the Act) other than that of seeing that the individual passed by them was fit to travel to his destination. Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick was of the same opinion as Sir Charles Elliott, and wrote in paragraph 58 of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1888 :

It seems to the Chief Commissioner that there can only be one remedy for this (*i.e.*, the heavy mortality among "bad batches" imported), and that it is the duty of the Government, as it is for the interest of the planting community, to adopt it, *viz.*, to insist upon a strict medical examination, not merely, as at present, as to the fitness of the coolie to travel, but also as to his fitness to stand the change to Assam and to labour there.

He urged an amendment of the law on the subject, and the late Mr. Quinton afterwards took the same view. Mr. Quinton wrote on page 47 of the special report on the working of Act I of 1882 in the Province of Assam during the years 1886-89 that—

He thought that changes in the present law were called for in the interests both of the labourer and of the employer. He would accordingly propose, in the event of a general amendment of the law being undertaken, that medical examination with a view to ascertain if the labourer is in a fit state of health and able in point of physical condition to undertake the journey to, and to labour in, the labour district to which he is to proceed, should be made compulsory in the case of coolies recruited by contractors; or in other words that we should revert to the procedure of sections 42, 53 and 54 of Act VII (B.C.) of 1873.

and again :

In the case of sardari recruitment, the Chief Commissioner would leave the medical examination optional to the employer, as provided in section 70 of Act I of 1882, but in order to meet exceptional cases, such as, *e.g.*, when 'bad batches' are being imported by the sardar, he would modify section 67 of the Act in the terms of the proviso to section 21, Act VII (B.C.) of 1873, authorising the registering officer in any case in which he thought fit to require a medical certificate both of fitness to travel and of fitness in point of physical condition to labour in the labour districts. These changes would only apply to persons recruited as effective labourers whom it is intended to place on contract under the Act. Other persons accompanying labourers as dependents would continue, as at present, to be merely subject to medical examination, with a view to ascertain their fitness to journey to the labour district.

No action was, however, taken on these recommendations, when Act I of 1882 came under amendment in 1893. Consequently, when the whole question came under Sir William Ward's consideration, he decided that the practice initiated by Sir Charles Elliott should be discontinued, as being inconsistent with the expressed intention of the legislature, and that the Civil Surgeon at Dhubri should no longer examine labourers as to their fitness to labour, except when requested to do so by their employer.

14. On the occasion of a recent visit to Dhubri, Mr. Cotton made particular enquiries into the effect of this order, and was assured by Surgeon-Major E. F. H. Dobson, the Civil Surgeon, that, although in a large number of cases he has, at the request of the employer, examined coolies as to their fitness to labour, in the great majority of cases no such examination is now made by him, and that in his opinion a large number of labourers are now imported into Assam who are really unfit for work in the province, and that in consequence the amount of mortality among new arrivals must inevitably increase. This corroborates the information the Chief Commissioner has received from other sources, that the present year is likely to prove a very unhealthy one among tea gardens throughout the province. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the majority of the coolies placed under contract at Dhubri have already been medically examined outside the provisions of the Act at Bilaspur, and other recruiting centres, and that only those who are passed at this unofficial medical examination are sent on to Dhubri. Complaints have lately been made by persons connected with the recruiting business against the action taken by the Civil Surgeon of Dhubri in rejecting emigrants who have already been passed by the doctors employed by them. On the whole, however, although the recent orders are in conformity with the principles laid down in the Act, Mr. Cotton is obliged to express his opinion that the alteration in procedure has not been beneficial. The Chief Commissioner does not agree with the theory that the responsibility for the fitness of Act-I labourers to work and reside in the labour districts should be thrown on the employer, and he considers that it is incumbent on the Government, so long as a penal system of contract is maintained, to ensure that only healthy labourers are sent to Assam, just as much as it is incumbent on it to ensure that proper sanitary arrangements are made

for protecting them during their journey to Assam and afterwards during their term of service on the tea gardens. It is difficult to exaggerate the amount of mortality which is now due to the importation of sickly and unfit coolies into the province. The examination by a competent medical officer appointed by Government should be complete and thorough, and in the Chief Commissioner's opinion when a revision of the Act is undertaken, this is one of the points on which the existing law should certainly be reconsidered.

15. At the same time, the Chief Commissioner is not blind to the practical inconvenience which the strict enforcement at Dhubri of the examination of coolies as to their fitness to labour in Assam would be likely to occasion. An immigrant coolie by the time he has arrived at Dhubri has crossed the Rubicon, and if he is medically rejected there, it is almost impossible to arrange for his repatriation without distinct hardship to himself. If a coolie is medically rejected for unfitness to labour, this rejection should take place, not at Dhubri or in any labour district, but in the district of recruitment, and before the coolie has left his own country. Mr. Cotton has separately urged upon the Government of India that the registration and contracting of coolies for labour in Assam should be effected locally in the district of recruitment, and it is there that the medical examination both for fitness to travel to, and to work in, a labour district should always take place.

Repatriation of persons medically rejected at Dhubri.

16. Of the 426 persons rejected by the Civil Surgeon in 1896, only 119 were repatriated, while 153 were sent on as dependents, and 154 as free labourers. In 1895, with 835 rejections, the corresponding figures were 230, 388, and 217. The proportion of persons repatriated to the total number rejected was thus very much the same in the two years. As stated in last year's Report, the Deputy Commissioner is directed to repatriate all persons medically rejected, except when such a course would result in distinct hardship to the person himself, and, in deciding what would constitute hardship, to take into consideration (1) whether the immigrant is or is not permanently incapacitated for earning a livelihood in a labour district; (2) the wishes of the immigrant himself; (3) whether or not other members of the immigrant's family are proceeding to, or are living on, the same garden as that to which it was intended that he should be sent; (4) the circumstances of the immigrant in his own country; and (5) the physical defects for which he has been medically rejected. The Deputy Commissioner has not discussed in his report the working of these instructions, but, in deciding what should be done with persons medically rejected, he apparently leaves too much in the hands of the managers of the depôts. This matter will form the subject of further enquiry.

Dhubri depôts.

17. There were, as in previous years, three depôts at Dhubri, and they appear to have been well managed. The Deputy Commissioner reports that the buildings are kept neat and clean, and that the sanitary arrangements are carefully looked after. There are two Native Doctors attached to the three depôts.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley.

18. In last year's report it was stated that country boats had been replaced by feeder steamers as a means of coolie transport in the Surma Valley. The steamers are now in turn likely to be displaced to a very great extent by the Assam-Bengal Railway, which will not only accelerate the journey to the point of debarkation, but will also, as a rule, greatly reduce the distance to be travelled on foot after debarkation. The question of sanctioning the railway as a route for Act immigrants is understood to be still under consideration by the Bengal Government.

Debarkation depôts.

19. The following statement shows the extent to which the debarkation depôts were used during the year:

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants labelled.	Number that passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts executed at depôts.	Expenditure.	
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For eight days.		Buildings.	Establishment, etc.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar ...	2	11,648	1,904	14	108	103	1,340	2	1,200 0 0	*4,742 2 1
Sylhet ...	5	27,083	4,852	...	26	59	312	2	325 3 9	1,212 10 11
Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	1	10,183	8,797	372	147	233	3,096	...	442 2 4	2,347 14 3
Nowgong ...	1	3,251	3,054	152	56	237	2,609	...	97 14 0	486 8 10
Sibsagar ...	3	13,807	15,085*	1,903	265	494	1,465	...	876 7 8	2,658 9 8
Lakhimpur ...	1	15,016	2,670	546	413	...	1,711	...	401 6 0	1,730 0 4
Total for 1896 ...	13	80,778	36,060	2,987	1,015	1,126	11,433	4	3,346 1 9	13,128 4 1
" " 1895 ...	13	72,597	37,740	1,972	910	784	9,732	17	4,302 1 6	11,617 5 7
" " 1894 ...	13	46,295	35,377	3,189	815	434	6,412	92	3,276 13 4	11,738 11 7

* Includes 1,466 coolies for the Lakhimpur district.

Notwithstanding a large increase in the total number of immigrants, there was a further decrease in the number using the depôts. Until 1894, about three-fourths of the immigrants to the province used the depôts; in 1895 the proportion fell to about one-half, and in 1896 it was less than one-half. The districts of Cachar, Sylhet, and Lakhimpur are responsible for the decrease, but no explanation has been offered by the Deputy Commissioners of the two first-named districts. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur states that sardars and other garden agents took charge of a large number of the immigrants to that district direct from the steamers, and that such coolies have not been entered under column 4 of the statement. This, however, is not a sufficient explanation. Under Rule 109 of the rules framed by the Chief Commissioner under Act I of 1882, all Act coolies and their dependents landing at a port of debarkation must, and all non-Act coolies and their dependents may, pass through the depôt for registration. This rule has evidently been disregarded in Lakhimpur, to which district the number of adult Act immigrants alone numbered 8,586, exclusive of the dependents accompanying them. It is probable also that the rule has not been strictly observed in Sylhet and Cachar, and the attention of the Deputy Commissioners concerned will be drawn to the matter.

Detentions at depôts.

20. The number of detentions increased under all heads. As usual, Sibsagar was responsible for the greater part of the detentions for want of a guide, which occur chiefly at the Kokilamukh depôt amongst coolies who are landed there for gardens in North Lakhimpur. Now, however, that telegraphic communication with that subdivision has been opened, these detentions should become much fewer in number and shorter in duration, and the Deputy Commissioner should enforce strictly the enhanced diet-rates prescribed for such cases. It is proposed to open a new depôt at Komolabari for coolies proceeding to gardens in North Lakhimpur. The increase in the number of detentions on account of sickness occurred entirely in the districts of Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, and was due to the severe outbreak of cholera which took place on the river steamers in the early part of the year. The same cause explains the large increase in the number of persons detained for purposes of segregation. The statement that there were no detentions in the Lakhimpur district is probably due to a mistake and the fact that there were 97 deaths from cholera at the Mohanamukh depôt shows that segregation must have been necessary in a large number of cases. On this point also an explanation will be called for from the Deputy Commissioner.

In the course of his tour in connection with the enquiry into the arrangements for the transit of immigrants to Assam, Surgeon-Major Campbell visited most of the debarkation depôts in the province, and made many valuable suggestions regarding them. Separate action has been taken to give effect to his recommendations, which include the establishment of new depôts at Rangamati and Komolabari in the Brahmaputra Valley and at Madna in the Surma Valley.

Mortality at Dhubri, and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

21. The following figures show the number of deaths among all classes of immigrants at Dhubri and during the river journey to the gardens of the Assam Valley districts:

	Number of deaths		
	From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
At Dhubri	92	...	92
On board the steamer. Between Goalundo and Dhubri. ...	73	7	80
On board the steamer. Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh. (a) Goalundo coolies	152	4	156
On board the steamer. Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh. (b) Dhubri "	57	20	77
At ports of debarkation—			
Gauhati	...	...	...
Tezpur	88	9	97
Silghat	23	2	25
Kokilamukh	69	12	81
Disangmukh	24	6	30
Nigriting	18	1	19
Mohanamukh	97	14	111
Total	693	75	768
Total for 1895	208	40	248

The year was marked by a deplorably large mortality from cholera. The outbreak of this disease in the early months of the year was one of the worst ever known on the river, and attained such virulence in the month of February that, at the

instance of Sir William Ward, the Government of Bengal and the Central Provinces Administration stopped temporarily all immigration to Assam. Had this not been done, it is possible that the mortality in this province would have been higher than it was, but it must be borne in mind that the sudden stoppage of all immigration necessarily entails a block among the coolies collected at the depôts and all along the routes taken by immigrants from the original districts of recruitment, and it is a question whether a possible decrease in the mortality on the Brahmaputra is not attained at the expense of a still more heavy mortality amongst intending immigrants in Bengal and other provinces. The stoppage of emigration, moreover, entails the dislocation of work on tea gardens and imposes loss on the industry. An equally severe outbreak of cholera occurred in the early part of 1897, and it was suggested that emigration should again be temporarily stopped; but Mr. Cotton was unable to accept the suggestion, in view of the above mentioned general considerations, and of the fact that famine was rife in the recruiting districts, and that it was undesirable to do anything to check emigration from the areas affected. It was thought preferable to face the epidemic with vigorous preventive measures, the chief of which were the reduction of the number of coolies carried per steamer by the addition to the service of eight extra steamers, the careful adherence to all sanitary rules, and the provision of better and more ample accommodation at the depôts. Thanks to the willing co-operation of the steamer companies, the action taken was successful in stamping out the disease, though not unfortunately until very heavy mortality had occurred.

Mortality during transit to the Surma Valley.

22. The following figures, based on reports furnished by the hospital assistants in charge of debarkation depôts in Sylhet and Cachar, relate only to the mortality which occurred amongst the immigrants and their dependents who passed through the depôts:

District.	Year.	Number of immigrants who passed through the depôts.	Deaths.		
			En route from Goalundo.	At the depôts.	Total.
Cachar	1896	1,904	32*	25	57
	1895	3,385	23*	20	49
	1894	2,243	13†	30	43
Sylhet	1896	4,552	19	9	28
	1895	10,840	10	35	45
	1894	6,061	4	10	14

* All on steamers. † Four on steamers, and nine on country boats.

These figures give no idea of the mortality among the general body of immigrants who do not use the depôts, nor can they be considered reliable even in respect of the coolies who did pass through them. In paragraph 15 of his report Dr. Campbell shows that no less than 54 deaths from cholera occurred at the Fenchuganj depôt in 1896, but the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, reports only 9 deaths from all the depôts in his district. The inaccuracy of these statistics has often been commented on, but steps are now being taken to improve them, on the suggestion of Dr. Campbell, by the introduction of a way-bill which will contain information regarding every immigrant embarking on board the steamers.

Special enquiry into causes of mortality.

23. In the report for 1895 it was stated that a medical officer would shortly be deputed to ascertain what measures were required for the prevention of cholera and to enquire into the whole question of the arrangements made for the welfare of emigrants on board the river steamers and in the depôts. Surgeon-Major R. Neil Campbell, I.M.S., was deputed in November 1896 to make this enquiry, and in February 1897 he submitted his report, giving a full account of the system of transit from the time the coolies reach the great recruiting centres in the Central Provinces and Bengal until their arrival in the debarkation depôts in the labour districts. The defects in the existing arrangements were noticed, and suggestions were made for remedying them, which, however, it is unnecessary to detail here, as the whole question has been dealt with in a separate Resolution (No. 1275R., dated the 15th April 1897). It will suffice to say that measures have since been taken in accordance with Dr. Campbell's recommendations, which it is hoped will result in a substantial improvement in the present system and a corresponding decrease in the mortality. It is understood that an enquiry similar to that made by Dr. Campbell has been set on foot in the Bengal province. Dr. Campbell has clearly shown that cholera is prevalent amongst the immigrants long before they reach the steamers, both at the recruiting depôts and during the railway transit. The total number of deaths among coolies before they embark on the steamers at Goalundo and Jatrapur is not available to the Chief Commissioner, but he was shocked to hear, when he was at Dhubri in March last, that

during one month of the current year there had been no less than 90 deaths from cholera in the train between Naihati and Jatrapur, and he fears that from Bilaspur onwards the numbers must have been even greater than this. There is no doubt that coolie immigrants into Assam are often infected in a terrible degree by the germs of cholera *en route*, and that the welfare of this province is as much dependent on the introduction of improved sanitary arrangements at the depôts of recruitment, and along the line of rail in the Central Provinces and Bengal, as it is on the introduction of reforms on the river steamers and at the debarkation depôts in Assam.

Anti-cholera inoculation.

24. In connection with this matter, the proposal has been made by Dr. Campbell and others that anti-cholera inoculation centres should be established for the inoculation of intending immigrants. This matter is primarily one to be decided by the Local Governments of the recruiting districts; but as the interests of Assam are deeply involved in any arrangements that may be made it has also received the careful consideration of the Chief Commissioner,* who has come to the conclusion that, although there are many difficulties in the way, they do not appear to be insuperable, and that the scheme is one which it is very desirable to introduce. It has been pointed out that the inoculation ought to be done at the recruiting depôts before the coolies start on their journey, and that, if the proposals to make initial registration compulsory, and to allow a week to elapse between registration and execution of contract are given effect to, it might be possible to arrange for the inoculation of the coolies immediately after registration. A considerable number were inoculated as a tentative measure by the Deputy Sanitary Commissioner, Bengal, last cold season, and steps are now being taken to ascertain to what extent the persons thus treated enjoyed immunity from cholera during transit.

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

25. The same system was maintained as in previous years of investigating all cases where there seemed reason to suspect that fraudulent or irregular practices had occurred in connection with the recruitment and transport of labourers. These enquiries are made (*a*) at Dhubri by the Embarkation Agents and (*b*) in the actual labour districts. The latter are much more important than the former, as in the Dhubri cases, enquiries are, as a rule, made upon mere suspicion.

26. The number of cases investigated at Dhubri was, as usual, considerable.

(*a*) Cases enquired into at Dhubri. Enquiries were made at this station—

(*a*) in consequence of communications received from the district of recruitment either from the local officials or from the relatives of the persons supposed to have been fraudulently recruited;

(*b*) on complaints made at Dhubri by the person concerned at the time of registration; and

(*c*) in cases in which no complaint was made, but in which the registering officer had reason to think it likely that fraud had been practised.

There were 74 complaints of the (*a*) class received during the year, and 6 were pending from the previous year, making a total of 80 for disposal. The Deputy Commissioner has submitted an abstract of the action taken in these cases, from which it appears that in 60 cases the persons who formed the subject of the complaints could not be traced, and there was nothing to show that they had ever come to Assam at all. In one case, the complaint was proved to be groundless, and the immigrant refused to return to her country. In six cases, no sufficient grounds were held to exist for taking further action. Three cases were found to be true, and the persons concerned were repatriated. Prosecutions were instituted in two cases: in one the *arkatí* concerned was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment under section 417, Indian Penal Code (cheating), but was acquitted on appeal; in the other three men were sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment each under section 352, Indian Penal Code (assault). Eight cases were pending at the close of the year.

There were seven cases of the (*b*) class. In five of the cases six women and two men, on appearing before the registering officer, expressed their unwillingness to execute contracts, and these were all repatriated. One woman was taken off an up-steamer and sent back to Dhubri by the Subdivisional Officer, Goalpara, as she stated that she had been fraudulently recruited, and she also was repatriated. One woman with a girl five years old was despatched to her home, but was reported to have absconded after reaching Assansole. It appears that she was accompanied by a peon of the contractor, instead of being placed in charge of a peon selected by the Deputy Commissioner, which is an irregularity in procedure that should not be allowed to recur. No criminal case was instituted by any of these persons against the persons recruiting them.

* See paragraph 9 of the Chief Commissioner's Resolution No. 1275R., dated the 15th April 1897, reviewing Surgeon-Major Campbell's report.

Enquiries were made into seven cases of the (*c*) class, but in none of them was any evidence of malpractices forthcoming.

27. The following table shows the total number of cases enquired into in the actual labour districts during the past two years, and distributes them according as they were ultimately declared true, false, or not proved:

(*b*) Cases enquired into in the labour districts.

District.	Complaints.		True cases.		False cases.		Not proved.		Pending.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	16	7	6	7	...	...	10	...	...	...
Sylhet	6	7	3	7	1	...	2	...	...	...
Kamrup	2	6	2	1	...	2	...	3	...	...
Darrang	5	18	4	13	...	...	1	4	...	1
Nowgong	13	5	1	1	4	...	5	3	3	1
Sibsagar	31	38	2	17	10	5	19	9	9	7
Lakhimpur	59	47	10	21	14	12	20	10	15	4
Total	132	128	28	67	29	19	48	23	27	13

There was a small decrease in the total number of complaints, but the number reported as true has more than doubled. This increase, however, is due, not so much to there having been an increase in the number of cases in which the complaints made have been shown to be true, as to the fact that District Officers have acted more freely on the instructions issued by the Chief Commissioner that in these cases strict proof should not be insisted on, but that contracts should be cancelled and the coolies concerned repatriated at the cost of the employer in all cases where there is reasonable suspicion of any substantial irregularity having occurred. Thus, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet remarks:

> There were seven cases of wrongful recruitment during the year. These cases, though not proved by evidence, have, in consideration of the circumstances under which the recruitment took place, been shown as true cases.

28. The cases included in the above table are classified below separately for the two valleys, so as to show how many of the persons concerned had executed contracts of any description, and, when they were under contract, where the contracts were executed:

	Number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons.	Number under contract.			Number not under contract.	Contracts executed in				
			Act I of 1882.	Other forms of contracts.	Not stated.		Recruiting districts.	Calcutta, Cossipore, Goalundo.	Dhubri.	Labour districts.	Not stated.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Surma Valley ... True	14	14	12	1	...	1	7	6	...	...	...
Surma Valley ... False	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Surma Valley ... Not proved	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	14	14	12	1	...	1	7	6	...	...	...
Assam Valley ... True	53	65	58	4	...	3	20	3	39	...	...
Assam Valley ... False	19	30	23	5	1	...	12	3	14	...	...
Assam Valley ... Not proved	29	36	26	1	9	...	7	..	22	1	6
Total	101	130	107	10	10	3	39	6	75	1	6
Grand total	115	144	119	11	10	4	46	12	75	1	6
Grand total for 1895	*105*	*170*	*109*	*5*	*53*	*3*	*66*	*2*	*58*	*1*	*40*

As usual, the bulk of the complaints relate to immigrants to the Assam Valley. This may probably be ascribed to the greater recourse had by employers in that valley to the agency of contractors in recruiting, for complaints of irregularity in the case of persons recruited by sardárs are comparatively rare. As in 1895, the majority of the persons in respect of whom complaints were made had executed contracts under Act I of 1882. With regard to the locality in which the contracts were executed, the whole of those relating to the Surma Valley districts were executed outside the province. Of the Assam Valley contracts 45 were executed in the recruiting provinces, and 75 at Dhubri. The Chief Commissioner believes that the present system of registering and contracting coolies is very deficient, and he has submitted his views on the subject to the Government of India at length in a separate report. The remedy appears to lie in what is known as "initial registration," but in any case the registration ought to be effected more carefully and thoroughly than it is at present. Mr. Cotton has on various occasions inspected the contract procedure at Dhubri, and has no fault to find with the conduct of it by the local officers, but it is undeniable that the process is a mechanical one, and, that the coolies have stereotyped answers

to give to the questions addressed to them. They all say that they are going to work on a tea garden, that they are going for four years, and are going willingly, and it is impossible not to feel that the examination to which they are subjected is very different from what it would be if it were properly conducted near their own homes, with their own neighbours about them, and in the language and patois of their country. It affords no adequate substitute for the procedure at the time of registration which is contemplated by sections 32 and 66 of the Act. The Chief Commissioner is quite alive to the difficulty of making effective local arrangements in the recruiting districts, but there is no reason for supposing that it is one which could not be overcome. He considers that, above all things, it is essential that the registration should actually be carried out at the district of recruitment, and as near as possible to the emigrant's home, and not, as is too often the case at present, at some central station or in Calcutta itself. The success of the scheme of "initial registration" must depend entirely upon compliance with this condition, and no advantage whatever will be gained if Purulia or Bilaspur are allowed to become central depôts for registration, such as Calcutta and Dhubri are at present.

It may be mentioned here that the system of taking thumb impressions in the case of coolies who execute contracts at Dhubri has recently been introduced, and has already been found efficacious. In several cases coolies who denied the execution of any contract at that station have been proved to have done so by the aid of these thumb impressions.

29. No cases of fraudulent recruitment deserving of special mention occurred during the year. The reports submitted by the Deputy Commissioners contain, on the one hand, the usual tales of childish deceptions practised upon simple credulous people, or of unhappy or unfaithful wives deserting their husbands, to be themselves in turn deserted by their tempters and pseudo-paramours, and, on the other hand, stories of persons, disappointed in their expectations of what life on a tea-garden is like, endeavouring to repudiate their liabilities by a tale of alleged fraud and deception. The accounts from the various districts differ but little in substance, and, by changing the names of the parties and places, one report might be substituted for any of the others. The following summary of the cases in the Sibsagar district is taken from the Deputy Commissioner's report:

Thirty-eight cases of alleged fraudulent recruitment, affecting 46 persons, were under enquiry during the year, of which 7 had been instituted in 1895. Of these 46 persons, 13 were men and 33 women. Their contracts were executed as follows:

At Dhubri	31
„ Calcutta	4
„ Purulia	7
„ Bilaspur	1
In labour district	1

In the other two cases the persons concerned have not been found, and it is not known whether they executed any contracts. The subjoined statement shows the agencies by which the cases were brought to light:

Magistrate of recruiting district	20
Labourers themselves	2
Medical officers at debarkation depôts	9
Employers	6
Newspaper	1

Of the 38 cases instituted during the year 17 cases proved true on enquiry, in eleven of which the contracts were cancelled under section 11A; in two the contracts were cancelled by mutual consent; in three the cancellation of the contracts under section 11A has been recommended,* while in the remaining case further action was rendered unnecessary by the woman concerned stating her unwillingness to go back to her country, owing to her having settled down with a man on the garden. Five cases were found false and eight not proved. In one case the coolie was not traced. Seven cases are pending. Twenty out of the 46 persons whose cases were enquired into were recruited for the Singlo Tea Company, which has lately been importing contractors' coolies on a large scale.

* Since cancelled.

30. The above summary of the action taken during the year in connection with cases of fraudulent or irregular recruitment sufficiently refutes the statement which has been made that the powers given to the Chief Commissioner by Act VII of 1893 to repatriate coolies have been practically inoperative. Every effort is made by the officers of this Administration to obtain information of suspicious cases, and when they come to notice the fullest enquiries are made. Moreover, as already pointed out, strict proof is not required, but the Chief Commissioner directs the cancelment of the contract in all cases where there is reasonable suspicion of fraud or other substantial irregularity. Leaving out of account coolies repatriated from Dhubri before they had entered into a labour contract, 56 contracts were cancelled by the Chief Commissioner under section 11A of Act I of 1882 and repatriated at the cost of the employer during the year under review, and 47 contracts have been similarly cancelled during the first nine months of the current year. There were also many cases in which the knowledge that the Chief Commissioner had this power was sufficient to induce managers to agree to the cancelment of contracts without a reference to Government in cases where malpractices were proved to their satisfaction.

CHAPTER II.

LABOUR FORCE.

Statistics of the labour force.

31. The following figures, taken from the statement which forms an Appendix to this report, show the additions to, and deductions from, the total labour force of the province during the year 1896:

Labour force remaining at the end of 1895	...	...	537,312
ADDITIONS—			
Imported by contractors or garden sardárs, including free labourers and dependents imported direct	...	...	81,115
Local labour contracts entered into under sections 111 and 112 of Act I of 1882	...		28,915
Received from other gardens	...		7,180
Deserters recaptured	...		493
Remaining after expiry of contract.			27,847
Otherwise obtained	...		29,473
Births	...	...	13,098
Total	...	...	188,121

DEDUCTIONS—		
Transferred to other gardens	...	6,190
Left with permission or on expiry of contract	... ...	67,437
Deaths	... ...	18,272
Desertions	... ...	21,534
Free labourers put under contract.		20,337
Contracts cancelled under section 11A	... ...	55
Contracts cancelled under sections 111, 140, or 177, Act I of 1882.		316
Contracts cancelled under section 122	... ...	1,159
Contracts redeemed under section 142	... ...	4
Contracts dissolved by mutual consent	... ...	1,250
Total	... ...	136,554
Net increase during the year	...	51,567
Grand total at the close of the year		588,879

The total labour force at the end of the year thus exceeded that at the end of 1895 by 51,567 souls, or 9·6 per cent. In 1895 the corresponding increase was 43,328, or 8·7 per cent.

Mean strength of the labour force.

32. The statement below shows the total labour force at the beginning of each of the last three years, and the mean strength for the two half-years of 1896:

Class of labourers.	1st January 1894.	1st January 1895.	1st January 1896.	1st July 1896.	Mean strength for the first half-year of 1896.	31st December 1896.	Mean strength for the second half year of 1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Act adults	119,795	116,550	125,798	131,444	128,621	135,670	133,557
Non-Act { Adults ...	179,348	192,372	216,191	242,136	229,113	241,124	241,630
Non-Act { Children ...	179,133	185,062	195,423	206,148	200,785	212,085	209,116
Total	478,276	493,984	537,312	579,728	558,520	588,879	584,303

District figures of the labour force.

33. The total labour force of each district, and the variations in strength during the year 1896, are given below:

District.	1st January 1896.	31st December 1896.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	112,272	122,750	20·8	+10,478	+ 9·3
Sylhet	122,693	140,424	23·9	+17,731	+14·4
Total Surma Valley	234,965	263,174	44·7	+28,209	+12·0
Kamrup	3,562	3,730	·6	+ 168	+ 4·7
Darrang	59,663	65,485	11·1	+ 5,822	+ 9·8
Nowgong	17,603	19,237	3·3	+ 1,634	+ 9·2
Sibságar	120,276	129,002	21·9	+ 8,726	+ 7·2
Lakhimpur	101,243	108,251	18·4	+ 7,008	+ 6·9
Total Assam Valley	302,347	325,705	55·3	+23,358	+ 7·7
Grand total	537,312	588,879	100·0	+51,567	+ 9·6

As in 1895, the labour force has increased in every tea district in the province.

34. The following table shows the nationality and sex of the adult labour force during the last two years :

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

	Nationality.	Sex.	Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Ratio of nationality.
			1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	37,902	37,871	41,469	43,994	79,371	81,865	42·0
		Women...	32,778	32,716	42,614	43,818	75,392	76,534	
	Behar	Men ...	5,118	5,074	8,326	9,425	13,444	14,499	7·2
		Women...	4,134	4,158	7,263	8,377	11,397	12,535	
	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	9,877	10,305	21,927	23,051	31,804	33,356	18·6
		Women...	10,617	10,722	24,666	26,003	35,283	36,725	
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...		Men ...	5,628	6,277	25,200	30,228	31,128	36,505	19·0
		Women...	4,576	5,001	24,181	29,941	28,757	34,942	
Central Provinces		Men ...	4,986	9,311	1,961	5,136	6,947	14,447	6·8
		Women...	3,258	7,396	1,075	3,816	4,333	11,212	
Madras		Men ...	2,168	2,181	2,761	2,740	4,929	4,921	2·5
		Women...	1,568	1,567	2,788	2,791	4,356	4,358	
Bombay		Men ...	20	35	90	114	110	149	...
		Women...	3	21	86	96	89	117	
Nepal		Men ...	52	49	153	151	205	200	·1
		Women...	22	22	137	143	159	165	
Assam		Men ...	1,437	1,727	8,643	8,492	10,080	10,219	3·8
		Women...	1,354	1,237	2,751	2,808	4,105	4,045	
Total		Men ...	67,488	72,830	110,530	123,331	178,018	196,161	
		Women...	58,310	62,840	105,561	117,793	163,871	180,633	
Grand total		...	125,798	135,670	216,091	241,124	341,889	376,794	

The proportions of labourers from the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces have increased by 2 and 3 per cent. respectively, at the expense of Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas, and Bengal Proper and Orissa.

35. The following figures show the number of labourers of each nationality who are employed in each of the two principal divisions into which the tea districts of the province fall :

	Surma Valley.	Assam (Brahmaputra) Valley.
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	37,861	120,538
Behar	14,872	12,162
Bengal Proper and Orissa	39,201	30,880
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	58,651	12,796
Central Provinces	6,754	18,905
Madras	5,557	3,722
Bombay	166	100
Nepal	222	143
Assam	497	13,767

36. The percentage of Act and non-Act and all adult labourers belonging to each nationality is shown below :

Nationality.	1895.	1896.		
	Total.	Act labourers.	Non-Act labourers.	Total.
Bengal ... Chota Nagpur... ...	45·3	52 1	36 4	42·0
Bengal ... Behar	7·3	6·8	7·4	7·2
Bengal ... Bengal Proper and Orissa...	19·6	15·5	20·4	18·6
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	17·5	8·3	25·0	19·0
Central Provinces	3·3	12·3	3·7	6·8
Madras	2·7	2·8	2·3	2·5
Assam	4·1	2·2	4·7	3·8
Nepal	·2	...	·1	·1
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

37. The mean strength of the labour force in each district for each half-year of 1896, and for the whole year, is shown in the following table. The percentages of mortality and desertion are calculated on these figures.

Mean strength of the labour force in each district.

District.	Act.			Non-Act.						Total annual strength.		
				Adults.			Children.					
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	6,238	5,270	6,504	65,672	70,023	67,864	42,707	43,493	43,350	115,117	120,356	117,735
Sylhet ...	14,757	12,149	11,453	65,927	72,089	67,598	50,358	53,849	52,046	120,972	127,038	123,595
Kamrup ...	881	890	831	2,060	2,231	2,045	1,130	1,146	1,138	3,743	3,827	3,785
Darrang ...	25,846	23,021	26,354	17,464	17,090	17,727	19,514	20 883	20,232	62,758	63,069	64,213
Nowgong ...	5 619	6,122	5,720	7,446	7,494	7,470	5,960	6,126	6,043	18,125	1,742	19,233
Sibsagar ...	37,675	40,453	39,574	37,775	38,673	38,225	47,897	43,130	45,443	124,152	124,515	125,333
Lakhimpur ...	31,681	41,001	40,341	21,716	23,050	22,372	33,303	34,894	34,098	106,750	108,254	106,603
Total ...	428,021	433,557	431,089	229,113	241,650	235,371	200,785	209,116	204,950	555,520	574,303	571,411

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

38. The number of labour contracts under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act executed in 1896 is shown below and compared with the number executed in 1895:

Number of contracts made.

	1895.	1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
In the actual labour districts under section 111 of the Act.	14,885	14,782	— ·6
In the actual labour districts under section 112 of the Act.	11,442	14,133	+23·5
At Dhubri under section 112A of the Act	8,825	12,957	+46·8
In the recruiting districts	23,141	16,351	—29·3
Total	58,293	58,223	— ·1

Notwithstanding an increase in the labour force of 51,567, the total number of contracts executed under the various sections of the Act was slightly less than in 1895. The decrease in the number executed in the recruiting districts, which was considerable, has been noticed in paragraph 3 above, while the fluctuations in the number entered into at Dhubri, and in the actual labour districts, are discussed in the next three paragraphs.

39. The figures in the above table relate only to contracts executed under the provisions of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, I of 1882. In addition, a large number of contracts are entered into every year under Act XIII of 1859, especially in the Surma Valley districts, where immigrants are imported for the most part through unlicensed sardárs without any contract at all, and enter into contracts, which are often only verbal ones, after arrival on the garden. It is difficult to form even an approximate estimate of the number of these contracts. Section 492 of the Indian Penal Code is also occasionally resorted to. The number of contracts executed under this section is given below:

	1895.	1896.
Cachar	286	686
Sylhet	...	404
Kamrup	5	14
Darrang	...	...
Nowgong	...	...
Sibsagar	3,268	2,723
Lakhimpur	1,564	1,555
Total	5,123*	5,382

Sibsagar again shows the largest number of these contracts, but, as stated last year, the figures cannot be relied on. It is believed that these contracts are resorted to in that district only in the case of immigrants imported under the Sonthal Parganas District

Emigration scheme, and only 2,196 adults have been recruited under that scheme since its inception in August 1894, including 246 adults who have come up to districts other than Sibsagar. The figures for Lakhimpur relate almost entirely to employés of the Assam Railways and Trading Company.

40. The following table shows the number of local contracts executed under sections III and 112 of the Act, and the sex and nationality of the labourers entering into such contracts:

Nationality of labourers executing local contracts.

District.	Sex.	Contracts under section 111.	Contracts under section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality.										Total of columns 3 and 4.
				Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Bombay.	Coorg.	Assam.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14
Cachar	Men ...	131	345	328	20	355	143	30	...	...	...	...		476
	Women ...	56	283	58	17	94	203	2	...	...	...	...		379
	Total of 1896 ...	207	628	205	37	249	351	13	...	...	...	...		855
	„ „ 1895 ...	330	872	158	175	312	445	183	18	...	...	...		1,202
Sylhet	Men ...	2,520	791	868	466	544	710	82	569	...	1	4		3,311
	Women ...	1,789	644	554	303	536	504	34	478	...	...	5		2,433
	Total of 1896 ...	4,309	1,435	1,422	768	1,067	1,214	116	997	...	1	9		5,744
	„ „ 1895 ...	3,433	1,449	1,007	608	769	1,510	50	864	...	2	5		4,815
Kamrup	Men ...	...	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		3
	Women ...	2	3	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		5
	Total of 1896 ...	2	6	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		8
	„ „ 1895 ...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		1
Darrang	Men ...	2,324	1,005	1,476	187	307	98	80	151	...	8	1,212		3,329
	Women ...	1,636	706	1,196	165	298	74	74	103	...	5	387		2,402
	Total of 1896 ...	3,960	1,681	2,672	352	605	172	154	254	...	13	1,599		6,021
	„ „ 1895 ...	4,013	1,810	2,522	297	640	327	77	301	...	...	1,336		5,823
Nowgong	Men ...	303	69	246	22	56	12	28	7	...	...	1		372
	Women ...	264	24	184	12	55	11	24	2	...	...	...		288
	Total of 1896 ...	567	93	430	34	111	23	52	9	...	...	1		660
	„ „ 1895 ...	514	129	363	25	146	27	30	2	...	...	2		643
Sibsagar	Men ...	1,590	2,076	2,830	438	608	258	139	103	...	1	305		4,373
	Women ...	1,316	2,505	2,462	358	583	152	111	89	...	...	156		3,911
	Total of 1896 ...	2,912	5,571	5,312	796	1,191	410	240	192	...	1	461		8,483
	„ „ 1895 ...	3,776	4,845	5,139	758	1,053	386	80	198	...	...	361		8,001
Lakhimpur	Men ...	1,476	1,545	2,114	90	312	118	178	104	...	3	62		4,021
	Women ...	1,230	1,704	2,410	65	356	103	93	67	4	...	25		3,123
	Total of 1896 ...	2,805	4,339	5,524	155	708	221	271	171	4	3	87		7,144
	„ „ 1895 ...	3,389	2,571	4,605	251	608	87	209	160	3	3	40		5,963
Grand total of 1896 ...		14,782	14,133	15,574	2,152	3,941	2,431	845	1,713	4	18	2,157		28,915
„ „ 1895 ...		16,855	11,888	13,004	2,052	3,583	2,806	908	1,546	3	5	1,744		26,327

The total number of local contracts was 28,915, against 26,327 in the previous year. In 1892, 1893, and 1894, the figures were 21,918, 21,313, and 21,778 respectively. No reason can be assigned for the growing number of these contracts, except that the labour force has been greatly increased during the last few years. These contracts are of two kinds: (*a*) contracts under section 111 of the Act, which are limited to one year, and can be entered into direct by the employer and labourer without the intervention of a Magistrate; and (*b*) contracts under section 112 of the Act, the period of which may extend to four years, but which must be executed in the presence of a Magistrate. The period for which contracts under section 111 may be executed was limited to one year by Act VII of 1893. Since then the number of these contracts has greatly diminished, and labourers who formerly contracted for more than a year under section 111 now contract under section 112. The number of contracts under the latter section is now 14,133, against 868 in 1892, 2,703 in 1893, 8,617 in 1894 and 11,442 in 1895. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar makes the following remarks on this subject:

The bulk of the increase in the total number of local contracts has been in those for a term of two years. The difference between the figures of 1895 and the year under report in columns 11 and 12 of the statement in the following paragraph is to be accounted for by the fact that the contracts shown under column 11 were probably really for a period of three years. The date of the expiry of a contract is, as a rule, calculated from that on which the bonus is given to the coolie, who in return undertakes to execute a contract when an Inspector visits the garden. The period which has elapsed between the receipt of the bonus and the Inspector's visit

is then deducted from that for which the coolie agreed to execute a contract, and the balance is entered in the contract paper. This practice was described in last year's report, but what was said there requires some modification in the light of my own experience of the manner in which I have found that the system is worked. Contracts under section 111 are not executed, as a rule, as a preliminary to the execution of one for a longer term, but the bonus which the coolie receives on his undertaking to enter into an agreement when opportunity offers is treated as an advance, and the coolie is held to be under a contract under Act XIII to work until an Inspector visits the garden. This must, of course, under ordinary circumstances, occur within a year of the transaction. The system is adopted principally by the Assam Company, and I can confidently say that the coolies, almost without exception, thoroughly understand their rights and liabilities. They generally have a surprisingly accurate idea of the length of time they have to work before the expiry of their contracts. No case in which there has been any friction has come to my notice, and I don't think that there is any danger of abuses occurring.

Details of local contracts.

41. The following table gives details of local contracts executed in the actual labour districts, the classes of labourers who entered into them, and the periods of the contracts:

District.	Class of labourers.					Number of years.					
	Section 111.	Section 112.	Newly imported.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolie transferred.	Local.	Under one year.	One.	Two.	Under two and a half.	Three.	Four.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	227	628	780	73	...	...	...	111	21	...	409	314
Sylhet	4,304	1,435	1,285	3,533	2	924	...	4,302	723	...	526	16
Kamrup	4	6	6	2	...	...	...	2	6	...	...	...
Darrang	3,060	2,061	...	4,438	...	1,563	143	3,582	1,342	4	375	275
Nowgong	167	93	...	188	...	497	...	167	33	...	28	32
Sibsagar	2,512	5,171	278	7,051	...	1,654	63	3,012	2,753	250	847	87
Lakhimpur	1,805	4,339	100	7,016	...	16	...	2,868	3,609	3	388	338
Total of 1896	12,782	14,133	2,549	22,383	2	4,081	206	15,520	9,089	257	2,711	1,062
Total of 1895	*12,887*	*17,411*	*2,758*	*19,397*	...	*4,428*	*482*	*15,689*	*5,838*	*86*	*4,006*	*604*

The bulk of the local contracts are executed in the Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur districts in the Assam Valley, and of the 21,648 persons who entered into such contracts in those three districts, all but 478 were either time-expired coolies or were locally engaged. The practice of importing coolies without contracts of any description, and placing them under Act contracts in the labour districts, is extremely rare in the Assam Valley, and is far less prevalent in the Surma Valley than is commonly supposed. Over 54 per cent. of these local contracts are for one year only, and over 31 per cent. for two years; only 13 per cent. are for terms of three or four years.

Period of contracts executed at Dhubri.

42. The periods of the contracts executed at Dhubri in 1895 and 1896 are shown below:

Year.	Three-year contracts.			Four-year contracts.			Total contracts.		
	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1895... ...	*177*	*49*	*266*	*8,648*	*2,920*	*11,577*	*8,825*	*2,978*	*11,803*
1896... ...	120	91	211	12,837	6,450	19,287	12,957	6,541	19,498

Practically, the whole of the contracts executed at Dhubri were for the full period allowed by the law, *viz.*, four years. The number of contracts for three years has diminished steadily since 1893. Various explanations have been given of the circumstance that since the reduction of the maximum term of contract from five to four years in 1893, the proportion of contracts executed for the maximum term has increased and the proportion of contracts executed for three years only has diminished, but the real reason is doubtless the increased attention now paid to details of recruitment by the planting community. Prior to the enactment of Act I of 1882, the maximum term was three years only; it was then raised to five years, but although a five years' contract is more advantageous than one for three years from the point of view of the planter, he was slow to take advantage of the change, as he left all recruiting arrangements to his recruiting agents, who had little interest in the matter. But when Act VII of 1893 was under consideration, the question of the term of contract was fully discussed, with the result that planters now press their agents to fix the term of contract at four years whenever the coolies can be induced to contract for that period.

43. The following table shows the extent to which local contracts executed direct between employer and labourer under section 111 were verified by Magistrates or Inspectors during 1896:

Verification of contracts.

District.	Number of contracts under section 111.			Number verified.	Number not capable of verification on account of					Percentage of contracts verified.	
	Remaining unverified at close of previous year.	Executed during the year.	Total.		Expiry of contracts.	Death or desertion of labourer.	Sickness of the labourers.	Other causes.	Total.	(a) On total number of contracts.	(b) On contracts capable of verification.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	161	227	388	310	58	...	...	20	78	79·8	100·0
Sylhet	824	4,309	5,133	3,811	534	151	59	538	1,322	74·2	100·0
Kamrup	...	2	2	...	...	...	...	2	2	...	...
Darrang	883	3,060	4,813	3,959	97	11	9	737	854	82·2	100·0
Nowgong	58	567	625	551	32	5	2	34	74	88·1	100·0
Sibsagar	763	2,912	3,675	2,828	370	68	36	383	847	76·9	100·0
Lakhimpur	710	2,765	3,513	2,874	265	26	18	230	641	81·7	100·0
Total	3,369	14,782	18,151	14,333	1,475	261	117	1,964	3,818	78·9	100·0

The verification of local contracts appears to have been satisfactorily carried out; 78·9 per cent. of the total number of such contracts executed during the year were actually verified, the remaining 21·1 per cent. having been incapable of verification for various reasons. Of the reasons for non-verification, the death, desertion, or sickness of the labourers concerned accounted for 2·0 per cent. and the expiry of contracts before the Inspector's visit for 8·1 per cent. The balance, 10·8 per cent., were not verified owing to "other causes," such as absence on recruiting or other garden employment at the time when the annual inspection takes place, or the execution of contracts between the date of the inspection and the end of the year. Special visits of inspection were paid in several districts to verify contracts of the latter description, in accordance with the instructions in paragraph 26 of the Report for 1895, and it is probably in consequence of these special visits that the number of contracts remaining unverified owing to "other causes" has been reduced from 3,283 to 1,964.

44. The following table shows the number of contracts which expired by lapse of time, the number of such expiries reported by managers, and the number of contracts which were cancelled or determined during the year under the different sections of the Act:

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

District.	Number shown in grading returns as time-expired.	Number of time-expired contracts reported under section 141.	Number cancelled under section 115A.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 111B.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 111B.	Number suspended by Inspector for temporary sickness, section 120.	Number cancelled by Inspector for permanent incapacity, section 122.	Number made void by finding of committee or by orders of Deputy Commissioner by reason of unfitness, sections 129 and 132.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140A.	Number redeemed under section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	1,348	1,015	6	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	...	22
Sylhet	4,880	4,880	4	...	...	...	377	...	...	...	...	59
Kamrup	117	113	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Darrang	7,372	7,372	16	...	...	...	87	192	...	...	...	124
Nowgong	956	956	...	...	...	...	130	...	...	1	...	3
Sibsagar	9,367	10,181*	14	...	...	...	240	6	...	...	...	614
Lakhimpur	9,491	9,350	16	...	...	...	285	117	...	...	4	515
Total of 1896	33,641	33,867	56†	...	...	...	1,159	315	...	1	4	1,250
Total of 1895	*33,772*	*34,523*	*18*	...	*2*	...	*1,277*	*242*	...	...	*8*	*1,578*

* This includes 614 contracts, which were dissolved by mutual consent.
† The difference between this entry and that in column 23 of the return at the end of the Report is due to the Deputy Commissioners, Cachar, Darrang, and Lakhimpur, furnishing revised figures at the last moment.

45. *Section* 141.—*Notice of determination of contracts.*—In all districts except Sibsagar, it appears to be the practice of employers to report only the determination of such contracts as have expired by efflux of time. But section 141 of the Act requires the determination of all contracts to be reported, and the Chief Commissioner thinks that it is very desirable that the determination of all contracts, whether cancelled by mutual consent or redeemed or void for any other reason, should be communicated to the district officers. Orders in this sense will shortly be issued. So far as contracts determining by efflux of time are concerned, employers complied with the law in all districts, except Cachar, where 333 such expiries were not reported. The Deputy Commissioner explains that in the event of a labourer dying or deserting immediately

after the expiry of his contract and before the employer submits his monthly return under section 141, it is the practice to omit his name from the return. This practice is wrong, and should be discontinued.

46. *Section 11 A.—Cancelment of contracts for irregularities in recruitment.*—Fifty-six contracts were cancelled on account of irregularities in recruitment, against only 18 in 1895 and 14 in 1894. The circumstances under which cancelment was ordered in these cases have been explained in paragraphs 25 to 30 of this report. When contracts are thus cancelled, it is the practice to order repatriation of the coolie at the cost of the employer under section 11C of the Act. When this section was inserted by Act VII of 1893, it was hoped that the employer would recover the cost of repatriation and the expense incurred in importing the coolie from the contractor who supplied him, who would thus suffer a heavy penalty on account of the irregularity in the coolie's recruitment. Hitherto this has not been done, but the Chief Commissioner is glad to see that the Tea Association are now moving in the matter of bringing home the liability for expenses incurred in importing and repatriating fraudulently-recruited labourers to the persons who recruited them. This is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, for, if successfully carried out, it must inevitably result in a diminution in the malpractices connected with recruitment.

47. *Cancelment of local contracts under sections 111A and 111B.*—No contracts were cancelled under these sections, which were introduced by Act VII of 1893 as a check on possible abuses arising from the opportunity afforded to employers by section 111 of entering into penal contracts with their labourers without the intervention of a Magistrate. In view of the large number of such contracts executed during the year, this result is highly satisfactory.

48. *Section 122.—Cancelment of contracts for permanent incapacity.*—The number of contracts cancelled during 1895 and 1896 in each district owing to the labourers concerned becoming permanently incapacitated from carrying them out, the proportion of such labourers who were newly imported, and the agency by which they were imported, are shown in the statement below:

District.	Number of contracts cancelled under section 122.		Newly imported.	Agency by which imported.		
	1895.	1896.		Contractor.	Sardár.	Locally engaged.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	28	11	11	11	...	...
Sylhet	373	377	Not stated.	365	9	3
Kamrup	4	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	169	87	Not stated.	54	33	...
Nowgong	130	139	20	132	6	1
Sibsagar	264	240	127	207	31	2
Lakhimpur	309	285	282	226	56	...
Total	1,277	1,159	...	1,015	135	5

The last four columns of this statement contain information collected for the first time. Column 4 is designed to show the extent to which planters avail themselves of the provisions of section 122 to repatriate new coolies who are unfit for work on a tea garden. The Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Darrang have not reported the necessary details, but elsewhere it appears that a large proportion of the cancelments under this section related to new coolies.

Of 1,159 contracts cancelled, no less than 1,015 were those of coolies sent up by contractors, and only 135 related to *sardári* coolies. This confirms the view universally held of the superiority of the method of recruitment by garden sardárs over that by contractors. Details regarding the repatriation of coolies whose contracts were cancelled under this section will be found in paragraph 53 below.

49. *Contracts dissolved by mutual consent.*—The following table shows the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent during the past two years:

District.	1895.	1896.
Cachar	19	29
Sylhet	374	59
Kamrup	6	2
Darrang	67	124
Nowgong	20	3
Sibsagar	883	614
Lakhimpur	209	419
Total	1,578	1,250

The number of dissolutions by mutual consent was unusually large in 1895, the number in 1894 having been only 1,052, and in 1893, 664. The Sibsagar figures for

1896 were, as usual, large, owing to the extent to which the practice of cancelling existing contracts with a view to the execution of fresh ones prevails in that district. There was a marked decrease in Sylhet, but the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent in that district in 1895 was unusually large. In Lakhimpur, the figures have risen from 26 in 1893 and 49 in 1894 to 209 in 1895 and 419 in the year under review. The Deputy Commissioner has offered no explanation of the increase.

50. *Sections 129 and 132.—Contracts made void in consequence of estates being declared unfit for the residence of labourers.*—According to the statement given in paragraph 44, only 315 contracts were rendered void in consequence of the estates on which the labourers concerned were employed having been declared unfit, owing to unhealthiness, for the residence of labourers generally or of particular classes of labourers. The number would have been much larger but for the fact that a labourer released under section 129 or section 132 from the performance of a labour-contract to labour on an estate is liable to labour on any other healthy estate belonging to his employer and situated in the same labour district. Employers doubtless took advantage of this provision of the law, but the number of estates wholly or partially closed to labourers during 1896 was considerable, and the Chief Commissioner finds some difficulty in believing that there were not more than 315 contracts rendered void under sections 129 and 132 during the year. Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur are the only districts showing entries under this head, and enquiries will be made with a view to ascertaining whether the absence of such entries in the case of the other labour districts is not the result of some mistake in the compilation of the statement.

51. *Section 142.—Redemption of contracts.*—Only four contracts were redeemed during the year, against 8 in 1895 and 6 in 1894.

52. Section 170 of the Act provides that if an employer so wishes, and complies with certain formalities, periods of voluntary absence from labour without reasonable cause will be added to the original period of a labourer's contract, and section 121 makes similar provision for periods of sickness in excess of 30 days in the year. Employers, however, very rarely take advantage of the provisions of these sections.

Extent to which section 170 and the second paragraph of section 121 are made use of.

53. The following statement gives certain particulars regarding the repatriation of labourers on tea gardens under the provisions of the Act:

Repatriation of labourers whose contracts were cancelled.

1	2																		3									
	Number of contracts cancelled.																		Number of coolies repatriated.									
District.	Under section 11A.		Under section 11B.		Under section 11A and 11B.		Under section 122.		Under section 139.		Under section 140.		Under section 140A.		Total.		Under section 11C (section 11A),		Under section 122 (section 123).		Under section 142.		Under section 142A (sections 142B, 142D).		Under section 142E.		Total.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
Cachar	2	6	...	...	...	...	26	19	...	...	...	...	...	...	30	25	6	16	11	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	21	20
Sylhet	...	4	...	...	...	...	373	377	...	...	...	...	...	...	373	381	...	4	349	352	...	...	...	...	1	...	349	357
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	4	16	...	...	...	...	169	87	...	...	...	...	...	...	173	103	4	12	168	76	27	34	...	...	...	...	199	122
Nowgong	...	...	...	...	...	2	130	139	...	...	...	...	...	1	132	160	...	...	74	95	1	1	1	...	...	...	76	96
Sibsagar	8	14	...	...	...	...	264	240	164	6	...	...	...	...	436	260	6	14	153	218	...	...	...	...	...	...	159	232
Lakhimpur	4	16	...	...	...	...	309	285	...	117	...	...	...	...	313	418	...	...	214	229	...	40	...	...	...	...	214	269
Total	18	56	...	...	...	2	1,277	1,153	164	123	...	...	...	1	1,461	1,339	15	35	974	981	28	78	1	...	1	...	1,018	1,096

4									5								
Coolies whose contracts were cancelled under section 122 and who were not repatriated.									Cost of repatriation charged to Inland Labour Transport Fund.								
District.	Number who will be sent home when a sardar is ready to accompany them.		Number who purchased their freedom under section 139 of the Act.		Number who died.		Number who absconded.		Number sent to a lunatic asylum.		Under section 142C.		Under section 142E.		Total.		
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	
											Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.			Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
Cachar	...	...	5	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	205 0 0	...	...	.....	105 0 0	
Sylhet	...	...	15	22	7	3	2	...	...	...	.....	.....	...	...	.....	.....	
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	.....	...	...	.....	.....	
Darrang	...	...	9	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	299 14 0	498 0 0	...	...	299 14 0	498 0 0	
Nowgong	2	...	13	35	27	25	4	6	...	...	8 0 0	15 0 0	...	...	8 0 0	15 0 0	
Sibsagar	...	...	106	21	2	...	1	...	2	1	359 10 3	184 12 0	...	...	359 10 3	184 12 0	
Lakhimpur	...	...	93	51	1	4	1	2	...	...	.....	673 9 6	...	...	.....	675 9 6	
Total	2	...	239	138	48	34	8	8	2	1	668 8 3	1,478 0 4	...	...	668 8 3	1,478 6 4	

The above statement has been prepared in a new form, in order to illustrate more clearly the working of the law as it now stands in regard to the repatriation of labourers. Of the 56 persons whose contracts were cancelled under section 11A of the Act, 36 were repatriated under section 11C at the employers' expense, and of the remaining 20, the majority were either sent back to the recruiting districts at Government expense as witnesses in criminal cases against the persons recruiting them, or had been repatriated by the employers before the contracts were cancelled by the Local Government. When persons are sent back to their country in the first instance at the expense of Government, and their contracts are subsequently cancelled under section 11 A, the cost of repatriation should ordinarily be recovered from the employer and the amount expended by Government refunded. Fewer contracts were cancelled for permanent incapacity to labour than in 1895, but a greater number of persons were repatriated. When contracts are cancelled on the ground of incapacity for labour, the employer is liable either to pay to the coolie a sum not exceeding three months' wages or to deposit the actual cost of repatriation, as the Inspector cancelling the contract may decide. In dealing with the question whether such coolies should be repatriated or not, the wishes of the coolie himself are the chief consideration, and he not infrequently elects to stay in Assam, where labour is scarce and work is plentiful, and where he often has friends or relations.

Of the 48 persons in 1895, and 34 in 1896, who died after their contracts had been cancelled under section 122, and before they could be repatriated, no less than 37 and 25, respectively, died in the Nowgong district, where the total number of cancelments in the two years was only 130 and 159, respectively. Many of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled must have been in a moribund condition at the time. The Deputy Commissioner states that he has made it a rule not to allow any contract to be cancelled under section 122, save on a medical certificate that the labourer concerned is in a state of health sufficiently good to ensure him a reasonable chance of being able to reach his home. But, however this may be, the proportion of deaths is excessive, and the Deputy Commissioner will be requested to see that more care is exercised in future. The Chief Commissioner is unable to allow the provisions of this section to be resorted to to reduce the apparent mortality amongst Act coolies.

Wages.

54. The following table gives some idea of the wages earned by Act and non-Act coolies. The figures are based on information obtained by officers inspecting gardens, who are required to ascertain the wages paid during the month preceding that in which the inspection is held :

Subdivision.	Act.		Non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr	3 8 6	3 4 0	5 0 0	4 8 0	2 8 0
Hailakandi	3 8 9	3 14 7	4 10 10	3 15 3	1 14 9
North Sylhet	4 7 8	3 7 8	4 5 4	3 6 0	1 15 1
South Sylhet	5 11 0	3 9 9	4 12 0	3 6 8	1 14 2
Karimganj	4 4 8	3 9 0	4 7 6	3 5 8	2 3 3
Habiganj	4 14 3	4 3 3	5 12 8	4 11 9	2 12 5
Kamrup	4 11 6	3 14 11	4 12 9	3 15 5	2 8 5
Darrang, sadr	4 3 1	4 11 0	5 7 1	4 3 1	2 4 2
Mangaldai	5 11 6	4 14 3	5 1 8	3 4 8	2 0 3
Nowgong	4 12 6	4 4 3	6 8 7	4 11 9	2 15 0
Sibsagar	4 13 8	3 12 3	5 13 9	3 13 9	2 8 2
Jorhat	4 12 1	3 8 10	6 12 0	3 6 0	2 15 1
Golaghat	4 11 11	3 14 11	5 10 11	3 15 10	2 13 11
Lakhimpur, sadr	5 7 3	4 6 1	6 5 6	5 0 6	3 1 0
North Lakhimpur	5 1 5	4 1 1	6 8 5	4 2 6	2 4 10

An examination of these figures, in conjunction with those given in the table in the next paragraph, shows that they have been somewhat perfunctorily prepared. Thus, in the Cachar sadr subdivision the average wages of Act men and women for the whole year are stated to be less than in either the cold or the manufacturing season, while in North Sylhet the yearly average wages of Act men and women are greater than the averages of the cold and rainy seasons taken separately. Orders will be issued enjoining the exercise of greater care in the preparation of these statements in future.

55. The table below shows separately the average wages paid to coolies during the manufacturing and non-manufacturing seasons, respectively. The wages in the manufacturing season are, as a general rule, higher, as more *ticca*, or extra, work is done then:

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.						Non-Act.								
		Men.			Women.			Men.			Women.			Children.		
1	2	3			4			5			6			7		
		Rs.	*a.*	*p.*	*Rs.*	*a.*	*p.*	*Rs.*	*a.*	*p.*	*Rs.*	*a.*	*p.*	*Rs.*	*a.*	*p.*
Cachar, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	4	8	0	3	8	0	5	8	0	4	12	0	2	8	0
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	3	12	0	3	8	0	5	0	0	4	8	0	2	4	0
Hailakandi ...	Manufacturing ...	4	8	1	3	13	11	4	14	7	4	6	8	2	3	1
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	3	13	11	3	11	2	4	1	3	3	15	11	2	0	9
North Sylhet ...	Manufacturing ...	4	5	7	3	6	11	4	9	10	3	11	9	2	2	1
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	4	11	3	3	11	4	5	4	3	5	3	1	14	9
South Sylhet ..	Manufacturing ...	4	14	6	3	10	0	4	11	11	3	9	6	2	1	5
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	11	9	3	9	6	4	12	1	3	3	7	1	10	4
Karimganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4	0	10	3	3	7	5	4	2	4	2	11	3	0	10
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	3	8	0	3	10	0	5	2	10	3	2	5	2	8	11
Habiganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4	12	3	4	1	6	5	8	10	4	11	9	2	13	10
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	9	10	3	12	0	5	1	6	3	15	11	2	6	8
Kamrup ...	Manufacturing ...	5	5	7	3	14	0	5	0	9	4	6	9	2	6	9
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	12	1	3	15	3	4	11	5	3	13	0	2	8	11
Darrang, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5	14	7	4	12	8	6	4	10	3	14	8	2	7	3
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	5	0	1	3	12	2	5	15	1	3	3	5	2	4	5
Mangaldai " ...	Manufacturing ...	6	3	9	4	7	2	5	13	3	3	13	1	2	0	1
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	11	7	3	13	0	4	15	3	3	1	3	1	14	3
Nowgong ...	Manufacturing ...	4	15	3	4	11	7	7	5	6	5	6	3	3	5	0
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	7	7	3	6	11	4	15	6	3	7	2	2	3	0
Sibsagar, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5	0	0	3	15	6	6	3	11	4	2	3	2	11	2
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	8	5	3	9	1	5	7	7	3	9	3	2	5	3
Jorhat ... " ...	Manufacturing ...	5	2	2	3	15	10	6	5	6	3	12	0	2	3	0
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	5	0	3	1	5	5	5	0	3	5	2	2	2	6
Golaghat ...	Manufacturing ...	5	5	7	4	0	1	5	15	9	3	12	8	2	8	9
" ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	1	3	3	12	10	5	6	2	3	3	1	2	2	1
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5	11	0	4	12	0	6	15	9	5	7	10	3	5	10
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	5	3	6	4	0	3	5	11	4	4	9	4	2	12	3
North Lakhimpur ...	Manufacturing ...	5	6	1	4	8	9	6	14	4	4	2	9	2	6	10
" " ...	Non-manufacturing ...	4	12	10	3	9	6	6	2	7	4	1	3	2	3	0

As explained in previous reports, many collateral means of livelihood are open to tea-garden coolies, such as the cultivation of rice, the keeping of cows for the sale of milk and of bullocks for hiring out, and the rearing of pigs, goats, and poultry. But, even allowing for this, the Chief Commissioner still doubts whether the wages offered are sufficient, especially in the case of new coolies to whom these resources are not open, and whose minimum pay for the first three years of service is fixed by the law at only Rs. 5 a month for men and Rs. 4 for women.

The following remarks of Mr. Monahan, at that time Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, which were reproduced in paragraph 31 of the Report for 1894, seem to Mr. Cotton to be very much to the point:

> The main cause of the high rate of mortality among Act coolies is generally said to be the importation of weakly and unsuitable coolies. I do not think it can fail to strike anyone who looks at a number of batches of newly-arrived coolies, that most of them are not average specimens of the labouring classes of India, but people of inferior physique and constitution, who, having failed to make a living in their own country, emigrate to Assam as a last resource. That a better class of labour is not attracted to the tea industry in Assam, is, I think, due to the fact that the wages offered are too low. These wages are sometimes compared with the rates which prevail in the native districts of the coolies imported; but that is hardly a fair comparison. I think they should be compared with the wages earned in other districts of India to which labourers emigrate for employment.

There seems to be very little doubt but that the offer of higher wages would attract a better class of labourers, and that not only would the death-rate be thereby reduced, but that the employer would also gain in the long run by the reduction in the cost of medicines and diet for the sick and by the greater capacity of his labour force for continuous and sustained labour. During the forty years that have elapsed since coolies were first imported from Bengal, the prices of all commodities in Assam have risen greatly, but wages are at almost the same level now as they were then: In the

proceedings of a meeting of planters and other grantees of lands in the Lakhimpur district held on the 30th April 1866, it was stated—

The wages of a coolie at present are never less than Rs. 4-8 for a month of 30 days, and if a labourer chooses to work by contract, he may earn his Rs. 8 a month with ease.

At this period the outturn of tea was stated to be 3 maunds per *pura*, or 2¼ maunds per acre, and its price was 6 annas a pound. In 1896, the outturn exceeded 5 maunds per acre, and the price was nearly 8 annas a pound. In the early days of the industry all tea house work was done by hand, whereas now the rolling, firing, and sorting of the tea is all done by machinery. In Section IV of Act VI (B.C.) of 1865, the first enactment passed for the enforcement of penal labour contracts and the regulation of their conditions, the minimum rates of wages were Rs. 5 per mensem for a man, and Rs. 4 for a woman, and these rates are still in force for three out of the four years for which a contract to labour may be entered into. The prices of food-grains, milk, goats, fowls and other articles, on the other hand, have risen very greatly, and although, so far as rice is concerned, the employer is bound to supply his Act coolies at a maximum price of Rs. 3 per maund, whatever the cost to him may be, even this rate is in excess of that prevailing when Act VI (B.C.) of 1865 was passed, and as regards other articles of consumption, the coolie has to pay full market rates. There are indications in some of the labour districts of a tendency to pay wages at rates higher than the minima laid down in the Act, but, as a general rule, the minimum rates there given are closely followed, and the desirability of raising them is a question the consideration of which cannot be much longer deferred.

CHAPTER IV.

OFFENCES, INCLUDING DESERTIONS.

Offences committed by the tea-garden population against the general criminal law.

56. The following table shows the number and description of offences against the Penal Code and other laws (excluding Act I of 1882 and Act XIII of 1859) committed by tea-garden coolies during the last two years:

District.	Offences under Penal Code.										Offences under Act V of 1861.	Offences under other Acts.	Grand total of all offences.
	Culpable homicide, including murder.	Rioting and unlawful assembly.	Causing hurt grievous	Assault.	Theft.	Criminal trespass house trespass, and house trespass.	Dishonestly receiving stolen property.	Breach of contract, section 490.	Other offences under Penal Code.	Total.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cachar	...	39	3	11	13	7	2	...	12	86	31	3	120
Sylhet	...	107	6	7	11	4	4	...	5	144	1	9	153
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	3	8	...	...	20	18	7	...	4	61	9	3	74
Nowgong	...	3	1	1	3	...	...	...	2	10	...	...	10
Sibsagar	1	36	16	8	19	22	8	25	135	29	17	281
Lakhimpur	...	30	27	21	44	10	5	...	15	172	3	24	198
Total, 1896	6	243	53	48	123	68	30	8	63	709	73*	36	838
Total, 1895	7	86	06	33	132	32	28	2	62	448	38	109	589

In 1895 notwithstanding a great increase in the tea-garden population, the number of offences committed was smaller than in any year since 1880. The results for 1896 are far less satisfactory, and the total number of offences was higher than in any previous year. The number of convictions per 100 of the garden population was, however, less than in 1893; it was also less than the percentage of offences amongst the general population of the province in 1896. As compared with 1895, the greater part of the increase was under rioting and unlawful assembly, under which head the number of convictions rose from 86 to 243. The fluctuations in the number of persons convicted of these offences are considerable, owing to the fact that a large number of coolies are usually involved in each case. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet reports of the South Sylhet subdivision, in which 85 convictions were obtained under this head,—

There were several minor disturbances, but only one serious riot. This occurred at Bhagicherra. There was a change of management, and almost immediately an organised attack was made on the new manager and his assistant, both of whom were severely beaten. Thirty-two rioters were convicted and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

The number of offences under Act V of 1861 rose from 32 to 73. The increase took place entirely in the Cachar and Sibsagar districts. No explanation has been given

but the offences were probably petty cases of nuisance committed within municipal or town limits. The decrease in the number of offences under "Other Acts" was due to fewer cases under the excise laws having been instituted in the Sibsagar district.

57. The following table shows the offences which were committed by the tea-garden population, and for which convictions were obtained, for the past two years, under Act I of 1882, excluding the offence of desertion, which is separately dealt with below:

Offences committed by tea-garden population under Act I of 1882 excluding desertions.

District,	Act I of 1882.																			
	Section 151, garden sardár failing to report himself.		Section 153, garden sardár failing to report instructions received under endorsement on duty lists.		Section 163, labourers deserting, &c., after registration.		Section 165, employers refusing or omitting to keep registers, &c.		Section 168, employers neglecting to grant discharge certificates.		Section 171, labourers absent without cause.		Section 173, labourer absent without cause after the completion of initial sanitary registration.		Section 183, harbouring or enticing away or employing labourers under contract.		Total.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
Cachar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	7	2	8
Sylhet	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	11	3	12
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	12	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	4	...	4	13	7	35			
Nowgong	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	2	7	5		
Sibsagar	35	19	...	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	12	7	3	...	23	13	76	39		
Lakhimpur	6	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15	26	...	...	4	5	25	44		
Total	56	41	1	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	38	38	3	4	45	46	148	129		

No offence was committed in either year under sections 162, 172, 176, and 185.

Excluding desertions, convictions under Act I of 1882 are confined almost exclusively to offences under section 151 (garden sardárs failing to report themselves) section 171 (labourers absent without reasonable cause), and section 183 (harbouring or enticing away or employing labourers under contract). The number of convictions under sections 171 and 183 was the same as in 1895, but there was a decrease of 15 convictions under section 151. The total number of convictions under the special labour law was less than it had been for some years past, which is very satisfactory, in view of the large increase in the total Act population.

58. The following table shows the number of desertions reported among the adult tea-garden population, district by district, for the past two years:

Desertions.

District,	Total desertions among adults.		Desertions among Act population.		Desertions among non-Act popula-tion.		Percentage of desertions on strength among					
							Act population.		Non-Act population.		Total adult population.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	4,738	3,162	734	728	4,004	2,434	10·69	11·14	6·48	3·51	6·91	4·20
Sylhet	6,056	7,482	1,233	1,272	4,823	6,210	10·99	10·61	8·08	8·95	8·54	9·18
Kamrup	223	266	67	23	156	243	10·86	4·16	8·73	11·56	9·23	10·04
Darrang	1,259	1,321	972	950	787	631	4·02	3·61	4·88	3·55	4·37	3·38
Nowgong	493	625	271	285	227	340	5·72	4·97	3·10	4·54	4·12	4·69
Sibsagar	2,028	2,366	1,128	1,234	900	1,132	3·04	3·11	2·49	2·95	2·77	3·03
Lakhimpur	2,084	2,113	1,130	1,184	954	929	3·04	2·92	3·21	2·85	3·12	2·90
Total	17,386	17,595	5,535	5,676	11,851	11,919	4·55	4·32	5·58	5·04	5·21	4·79

In spite of the large importations in 1895, and of the fact that desertions take place for the most part amongst newly-imported immigrants, the number of desertions in 1896 among both the Act and the non-Act population was only slightly greater than in 1895, while the proportion borne by desertions to the total population of both classes was considerably smaller. The only points calling for remark in the table are the large decrease in the number of non-Act desertions in Cachar, and the almost equally large increase in Sylhet. The decrease in Cachar is attributed to the exceptional healthiness of the gardens in the district during the year, and the smaller demand for labour to work on the Assam-Bengal Railway. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet comments on the increase in his district as follows:

The increase in the number of desertions is approximately proportionate to the increased size of the total labour force. Desertions are due chiefly to three causes—(*a*) to direct enticement by managers of other gardens who prefer to make up their forces without importing, (*b*) to the attraction of the high wages obtainable for work on the railway, (*c*) to restlessness.

But, as has frequently been pointed out, the figures for non-Act desertions are of very little use. Many of the non-Act coolies included in this return were probably not deserters properly so-called, but were coolies without any form of contract who were shown as deserters merely because they left the gardens without permission.

Arrests and convictions of deserters under Act contracts.

59. The following table shows for each district—(1) the number of desertions of labourers under contracts under Act I of 1882; (2) the number of warrants issued for the arrest of such deserters; (3) the number of such deserters arrested; and (4) the number convicted of the offence of desertion (section 175, Act I of 1882):

District.	Number of deserters (Act labourers).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested.					Number convicted.
			By warrant.	By manager.	By police.	By summons.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	728	51	12	32	...	...	44	35
Sylhet	1,272	111	36	54	3	...	93	87
Kamrup	23	4	1	...	...	...	1	1
Darrang	950	102	24	51	...	5	80	79
Nowgong	285	36	15	35	...	...	50	50
Sibsagar	1,234	88	38	163	11	...	212	186
Lakhimpur	1,184	214	178	134	...	...	312	274
Total of 1896	5,676	606	304	469	14	5	792	712
„ „ 1895	5535	712	263	523	22	11	819	741

As usual, warrants were issued only in a comparatively small number of cases. The reason for this is that it is useless, as a rule, to apply for a warrant until the employer has obtained some clue to the absconder's whereabouts, and also that section 172 of the Act authorises the employer to arrest absconders himself without a warrant. Barely one-seventh of the total number of deserters were arrested. The facilities for getting away and procuring employment elsewhere are so great in Assam, especially in the Surma Valley, that it is very difficult to recover coolies who abscond.

Cases under Act XIII of 1859.

60. The manner in which complaints under Act XIII of 1859 were dealt with during each of the past two years is shown below:

District.	Number of coolies convicted.		Number of coolies who were ordered to perform their contracts.		Number punished with imprisonment for				Cases withdrawn.		Number of coolies ordered to pay their advances or pay compensation.	
					Two weeks or less.		More than two weeks.					
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	33	61	32	52	...	6	1	3	15	26	...	...
Sylhet	52	4	50	3	...	...	2	1	4	...	...	...
Kamrup	11	4	11	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	6	13	6	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nowgong	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	71	100	67	84	1	3	2	4	6	3	1	9
Lakhimpur	24	17	24	14	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...
Total	198	199	190	169	1	11	6	10	25	29	1	9

The total number of convictions under Act XIII was practically the same as in the previous year, but there were marked fluctuations in the figures for individual districts. The increase in Cachar is explained by the fact that the number of convictions in 1895 was unusually low. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet has offered no explanation of the large decrease in his district. Complaints were received in 1895 from certain planters in Sylhet of the difficulty met with in the execution of warrants against deserters, and recently a further complaint has been received from Habiganj of the inducements said to be offered by the officers of the State of Hill Tippera to deserters to settle down within the State territory. Orders were issued in 1896 with a view to increase the efficiency of the warrant-serving establishment, and the complaint from Habiganj has been referred to the Government of Bengal for such action as may be necessary. The decrease in the number of convictions under Act XIII in 1896 in the Sylhet district may have been due to the causes specified in these complaints.

In all, convictions were obtained against 199 persons, of whom 169 were simply ordered to complete their contracts, 9 were ordered to repay their advances, and 21 were imprisoned, against only 7 in 1895. The total number of sentences of imprisonment

is, however, very small compared with the number of cases instituted, except in Cachar, where 9 persons were imprisoned, out of 61 convicted. Further enquiry will be made regarding this district.

Proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens respectively.

61. The following table shows the proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens separately:

District.	Mean strength.		Numbes of desertions.		Percentage of desertions to labour force.		
	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	113,594	4,142	2,965	360	2·58	8·72	2·79
Sylhet	127,905	5,600	8,963	990	7·00	17·55	7·45
Kamrup	3,470	306	329	37	9·42	11·98	9·63
Darrang	60,925	4,188	1,497	245	2·49	5·81	2·71
Nowgong	14,166	5,167	531	214	3·74	4·13	3·84
Sibsagar	119,147	7,186	2,777	155	2·33	2·16	2·32
Lakhimpur	95,306	11,197	2,118	353	2·21	3·14	2·31
Total	533,622	39,786	19,180	2,354	3·58	6·22	3·76
„ 1895	472,091	49,738	18,447	2,943	3·86	5·91	4·05

N.B.—The percentage of desertions shown in this statement is the sum of the percentages for each half-year taken separately.

The total percentage of desertions (3·76) shown in this statement is calculated on the whole labouring population, including children, and is therefore less than that (4·79) shown in paragraph 58 above, which is calculated on the adult population only. The statement is an instructive one, and shows that the healthiness or otherwise of a garden is an important factor in the conditions which lead coolies to desert, especially in the Surma Valley, where only a small minority of the labouring population is under contracts under Act I: the rest are mostly under short term contracts under Act XIII of 1859, or work without any contract at all.

Punishments for desertion in the case of healthy and unhealthy gardens respectively.

62. The following table shows the punishments inflicted during the past two years on Act labourers for desertion from healthy and unhealthy gardens separately:

	District.	Number of Act labourers convicted of the offence of desertion.		Number punished with imprisonment for																					
				Two months.		Six weeks.		One month.		Three weeks.		Fifteen days.		Two weeks.		Ten days.		One week.		One day.		Others.	
		1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
From healthy gardens.	Cachar	39	35	...	...	...	...	6	15	...	...	1	...	26	6	...	...	5	5	1	9	...	...
	Sylhet	48	867	...	...	...	...	13	13	9	13	4	11	12	14	...	16	7	77	3	...	...	...
	Kamrup	13	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	6	...	1	1
	Darrang	55	74	...	1	...	...	7	7	1	10	3	3	14	12	1	4	7	13	5	3	18	38*
	Nowgong	24	27	...	...	...	...	4	4	3	1	12	17	3	2	...	...	1	...	1	3	...	...
	Sibsagar	202	182	14	1	3	4	34	16	13	2	43	15	30	24	12	33	47	56	16	24	...	7
	Lakhimpur	261	254	4	1	1	5	9	20	10	26	5	20	41	58	43	3	115	40	17	15	26	46
	Total	642	660	18	3	4	9	73	85	36	62	67	65	129	116	56	56	185	131	40	54	35	78
From unhealthy gardens.	Cachar	32	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	12	...	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...
	Sylhet	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...
	Kamrup	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
	Darrang	27	5	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2	...	7	...	3	...	12	5	1	...	2	...
	Nowgong	19	23	...	...	...	...	3	7	6	3	1	6	4	6	4	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
	Sibsagar	16	4	...	...	...	...	6	1	1	...	...	...	5	1	...	...	...	2	2	1	2	...
	Lakhimpur	4	20	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	1	...	12	...	...	...	5	1	2	2	...
	Total	99	52	...	...	...	...	17	10	8	3	8	7	28	19	6	...	17	9	9	3	6	1

* Of these one was fined.

Magistrates in Assam are directed, in awarding punishment on conviction of desertion, to ascertain as far as possible whether the garden from which the desertion took place is a healthy one or not, and to make due allowances whenever it appears that the unhealthiness of the garden is responsible for the desertion. These instruc-

tions appear to have been duly observed in the year under review. Moreover, punishments generally are far more lenient than they were formerly, when there was too great a tendency to award the maximum penalty in all cases. The maximum penalty, again, is now only one month for a first offence, two months for a second, and three months for a third, against three months in all cases under Act VI (B.C.) of 1865.

Nationality and sex of deserters.

63. The following table shows the nationality and sex of the coolies who deserted :

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deserters.				Total.		Percentage of deserters on annual strength employed.					
		Act.		Non-Act.				Act labourers.		Non-Act labourers.		Total.	
		1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Persons. Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas	Men	1,074	1,097	11,603	12,153	3,689	3,250	4·73	4·61	4·71	4·83	3·23	3·42
	Women	673	640	1,132	1,410	2,805	2,050	3·15	2·83	3·14	3·14		
Behar	Men	458	311	7	3	1,141	866	8·67	6·54	8·65	6·56	7·23	5·74
	Women	157	137	526	311	779	502	3·3	3·47	7·8	4·77		
Bengal Proper and Orissa	Men	451	481	1,639	813	1,850	1,226	4·83	4·26	5·14	3·77	3·93	3·15
	Women	105	134	840	606	1,145	840	1·34	1·49	3·47	2·15		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	Men	826	637	2,214	3,206	3,040	3,351	10·14	10·31	9·39	9·66	8·88	8·35
	Women	294	328	1,403	1,350	1,787	1,678	6·16	6·89	6·53	7·01		
Central Provinces	Men	313	654	214	419	533	1,073	9·73	9·97	10·14	12·43	9·89	8·75
	Women	130	198	56	274	185	472	5·24	5·72	7·18	10·66		
Madras	Men	71	100	120	213	191	313	3·27	4·04	4·55	4·04	3·40	3·55
	Women	28	44	83	56	111	100	1·75	2·76	3·52	2·69		
Assam	Men	79	117	763	815	842	932	4·59	5·82	5·16	6·76	4·77	5·08
	Women	20	35	76	61	96	147	1·51	2·13	1·84	3·04		
Total	Men	4,024	4,057	17,118	17,822	11,152	11,177	6·20	5·76	6·15	5·74	6·41	5·63
	Women	1,513	1,603	4,733	4,722	6,624	6,418	3·76	3·45	4·32	4·23	5·40	5·07
Grand total	....	5,535	5,660	21,851	21,544	17,776	17,595	4·86	4·32	5·16	5·14	6·01	5·39

Percentages are not given for desertions of coolies from Bombay (2 males) or Nepal (23 males and 2 females), as the total number of coolies of these nationalities is very small.

As in previous years, men deserted more freely than women, and desertions were most common amongst coolies from the Central Provinces and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, where the proportion of deserters to the total number of Act labourers exceeded 8 per cent. The Chief Commissioner is very unfavourably impressed with this result, and he thinks that this matter is deserving of more consideration than it has hitherto received. Inspecting officers will in future be directed to make special enquiries into the circumstances attending desertion in all cases where the proportion exceeds 4 per cent. of the Act labour force.

Ex-coolies found destitute in Bengal.

64. Towards the close of the year, the Chief Commissioner received from the Government of India a copy of a letter from the Bengal Government reporting that a number of ex-railway and tea garden coolies had been found in a state of destitution in the Tippera district. Enquiries were made, and it was found that all these coolies were natives of the North-Western Provinces and of two or three adjacent districts of the Central Provinces and Behar, and that they belonged therefore to a class which is notoriously addicted to bolting from their gardens or other employment without any apparent or adequate reason. The greater number of them had come to Assam for work on the railway, and none of these had ever executed agreements under Act I of 1882. It was also improbable that more than a very small proportion of the remainder, who were tea garden coolies, had been brought under the provisions of the Act. It is impossible to exercise control over the movements of such coolies. They are free to come and go, and unless they seek the assistance of the authorities, it is very difficult to help them. It is probable that at the time of their desertion they have a little money with them, and do not ordinarily run into a state of destitution until they are beyond the boundaries of Assam. Mr. Cotton has found the evil a very difficult one to deal with, but he has endeavoured to remedy it by directing the establishment of poor-houses at selected centres, to which these waifs and strays can be sent, and by causing magisterial enquiries to be made into the antecedents of all people resorting to these houses of refuge, and, in the case of Act coolies, into the circumstances attending their departure from the garden on which they had contracted to work. Each case will then be dealt with on its merits. It must, however, be remembered that detention at these refuges must be purely voluntary, and that in many cases the persons for whom they are designed will refuse to occupy them, or, having done so, will desert again. For such persons it is difficult to devise any measures of relief.

CHAPTER V.

VITAL STATISTICS AND HEALTH OF GARDEN POPULATION.

Birth-rate.

65. The following table shows the birth-rate per mille on tea gardens during each of the past two years :

District.	Birth-rate calculated on total garden population.		Birth-rate calculated on adult female population.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	21·7	21·8	72·3	71·4
Sylhet	23·6	24·7	77·6	80·3
Kamrup	36·3	26 6	105·6	79·4
Darrang	17·8	17·9	56 8	58·4
Nowgong	17·6	17·3	59·0	57·1
Sibsagar	23·4	23·6	79·9	81·1
Lakhimpur	22·3	24·8	71 3	79·1
Total	22·1	22·9	73·0	75·1

The proportion of females on tea gardens being much smaller than amongst the general population, the birth-rate must necessarily be smaller also. The last two columns have, therefore, been added to show the birth-rate calculated on the adult female population only. The estimated birth-rate in the province, excluding tea gardens, is 49·31 per 1,000 of the total, or 127 per 1,000 of the adult female, population.

Birth-rate according to nationality.

66. The table below distributes the births among the different nationalities, and shows the birth-rate among each class calculated on the mean strength of adult females :

	Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Provincial.	Madras.	Assam.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average strength of women under Act I or otherwise,	77,140	11,942	36,194	32,524	7,641	4,408	4,063	174,188
Number of births	5,946	1,014	2,756	2,453	278	337	308	13,098
Birth-rate per 1,000	77·0	84·9	76·1	75·4	36·3	76·4	75·7	75·1
" " " 1895	78·9	77·7	63·1	70·8	89·5	56·2	75·3	73·0

Births amongst females from Bombay (nil) and Nepal (6) are not shown, as the total population of these nationalities is very small.

There has been a slight improvement during the year in the way in which births have been registered, but the figures for 1895 were so unsatisfactory, and the improvement now shown is so small, that the Chief Commissioner is compelled to again animadvert on the inaccuracy with which births are recorded on tea estates. This inaccuracy has evoked unfavourable comments in the annual reports for several years past, and was fully discussed in paragraph 41 of the report for 1895. It was there shown that the registered birth-rate in tea gardens, calculated on the strength of adult females, had gradually fallen from 133·1 per 1,000 in 1882 to 73·0 per 1,000 in 1895, and the conclusion come to, as the result of repeated enquiries into the subject, was that the decrease was due to defective registration. The following extract from the paragraph quoted contains the decision arrived at by the Chief Commissioner as to the action to be taken to secure greater accuracy :

> Orders will accordingly issue shortly, directing District Officers to address all employers on the subject, inviting their co-operation in effecting a reform, and warning them of the liabilities they incur in keeping incorrect registers and making incorrect returns. District Officers will be required to carefully scrutinize the returns of vital statistics at the end of each half-year, and to institute enquiries in all cases in which registration appears to have been specially defective. If the result of such enquiries warrants the conclusion that the figures returned are inaccurate, the employers concerned will be formally warned that a repetition of the neglect will entail a prosecution under section 163 of the Act. If at the end of the succeeding half-year, the result of the scrutiny shows that, notwithstanding the warning, the returns are again incorrect, prosecutions will be instituted in a few of the worst cases. Sir William Ward does not believe that there is any intentional disregard on the part of employers of their responsibilities in this matter. The defective registration of births is probably due solely to the want of systematic supervision of

the clerk or other person in actual charge of the registers, and it seems certain that if employers could be induced to recognise the importance of the matter, and to take a personal interest in securing accuracy in the figures, the defects complained of would soon disappear.

These orders were issued during the second half-year of 1896, and the result will therefore not appear till the number of births registered during the current year is known. Mr. Cotton is glad to notice, from the reports submitted by the Deputy Commissioners, that increased attention is now being paid to the subject. The following remarks by the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar (Mr. Nicholl) are reproduced:

I have made special enquiries on all the gardens I have inspected as to the method adopted for recording these statistics. As a rule, the registers are kept by the native doctor, and he is responsible for their accuracy. I believe that it is not uncommon to omit the entry of births in cases where it is doubtful whether the child will live or not, so that if it dies within a day or two after birth, both the birth and the death escape registration. At the same time, it must be remembered that a great proportion of the labour force of most gardens is made up of comparatively recent immigrants, among whom the birth-rate must be expected to be lower than among the settled population. Single men and women do not as a rule pair off and settle down in permanent couples for some little time after arrival, and I also fear that there can be little doubt that miscarriages are frequently intentionally brought about by the women themselves or by others with their connivance. I have found that in gardens where the labour force consists almost entirely of old and acclimatised coolies the birth-rate is considerably higher than on those which are constantly importing new labour, though no additional precautions are taken to ensure accurate registration. A good coolie, once thoroughly settled down, does not object to having a family. But while he is still in course of acquiring the means of independence, he does not want to have additional mouths to feed, or his wife to be incapacitated for a period from earning her full wage.

Of the considerations mentioned by the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar as operating to keep down the birth-rate, by far the most serious is the practice of procuring abortions, which is generally believed to be common amongst the labouring population on tea gardens.

Death-rate for the year.

67. The statistics of mortality for the year, and for each half-year separately, are given in the table below, with the corresponding figures of the previous year:

District.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half-year.		Second half-year.		Total.		First half-year.		Second half-year.			
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	1,927	1,653	1,555	1,867	3,482	3,520	17·5	14·3	13·8	15·5	31·3	29·8
Sylhet	1,858	2,025	2,278	2,255	4,136	4,280	16·4	15·6	18·6	16·3	35·0	32·0
Kamrup	91	84	64	69	158	153	27·2	22·4	17·8	18·0	45·0	40·4
Darrang	918	944	1,057	850	2,005	1,794	16·5	15·0	17·6	12·9	34·1	27·9
Nowgong	415	495	416	433	831	928	23·3	26·1	22·7	21·9	46·1	48·0
Sibsagar	1,590	2,002	2,001	1,769	3,597	3,771	13·5	16·1	16·5	13·7	30·0	29·8
Lakhimpur	1,636	1,944	1,895	1,882	3,531	3,826	16·8	18·5	18·7	17·3	35·5	35·8
Total	8,474	9,147	9,266	9,125	17,740	18,272	16·4	16·4	17·2	15·6	33·6	32·0

The death-rate in 1896 was lower than it has ever been, except in 1881 and 1894, when it was 31·7 and 31·9 respectively. In view of the abnormally large number of new importations in 1895, and of the fact that the mortality is always heavy amongst unacclimatised immigrants, it might have been expected that the death-roll in 1896 would be an unusually long one, and it is a matter for congratulation that instead of this the year was an unusually healthy one.

The steady improvement in the mortality on tea gardens is well illustrated by the following figures, which show the average annual death-rate during each triennium since 1878:

1878-80	50·7	1887-89	39·2
1881-83	36·9	1890-92	37·6
1884-86	39·9	1893-95	32·9
1896	32·0		

68. The following table shows the mortality among both Act and non-Act adult labourers during each of the past two years:

Death-rate amongst adults.

District.	Annual strength of total adult population of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.					
			Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1895.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	68,436	74,488	524	349	1,730	1,031	2,254	2,282	7·64	5·73	38·2	28·4	32·9	30·6
Sylhet	71,103	81,461	665	521	2,247	2,543	2,980	3,064	58·4	41·55	36·5	36·36	41·7	37·8
Kamrup	2,400	3,647	56	48	57	76	113	124	87·8	87·0	32·2	36·3	47·0	40·8
Darrang	40,244	44,081	1,385	1,206	331	332	1,716	1,538	57·2	45·8	20·5	18·7	42·6	34·9
Nowgong	12,124	13,200	311	329	333	297	644	626	64·0	65·1	45·4	39·7	53·1	50·8
Sibsagar	73,210	77,889	1,642	1,700	927	985	2,569	2,685	44·3	43·9	25·5	25·6	35·0	34·6
Lakhimpur	66,683	72,705	1,733	1,705	931	1,698	2,661	2,893	46·6	46·4	31·5	33·9	39·9	39·7
Total	334,298	366,460	6,316	5,908	6,926	7,262	13,242	13,160	57·8	45·7	31·2	30·8	38·7	35·1

The mortality amongst adults generally was less by 2·6 per mille than in 1895, and, while the death-rate amongst Act adults was, as is always the case, greater than amongst non-Act adults, the improvement in the former is specially marked, the rate having fallen, from 52·8 per mille in 1895, to 45·7. The improvement was shared by every district except Nowgong, where *kalá-ázár* is still very prevalent.

69. The following table shows the recorded causes of death among Act coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death among Act labourers.

District.	Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1896.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ankylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ... { 1896 ...	6,504	112	...	100	35	91	...	11	349	53·3
1895 ...	*6,836*	*125*	*75*	*115*	*110*	*35*	*50*	*14*	*524*	*76·4*
Sylhet ... { 1896 ...	11,953	68	51	137	52	19	11	183	521	43·5
1895 ...	*11,226*	*104*	*47*	*198*	*56*	*35*	*57*	*168*	*665*	*58·4*
Kamrup ... { 1896 ...	552	6	1	3	3	25	3	7	48	87·0
1895 ...	*628*	*14*	*1*	*6*	*2*	*10*	*4*	*19*	*56*	*87·8*
Darrng ... { 1896 ...	26,354	173	86	263	74	199	246	165	1,206	45·8
1895 ...	*24,152*	*333*	*70*	*288*	*67*	*295*	*152*	*180*	*1,385*	*57·2*
Nowgong... { 1896 ...	5,821	25	15	81	115	40	10	93	379	65·1
1895 ...	*4,792*	*29*	*10*	*34*	*139*	*18*	*26*	*55*	*311*	*64·9*
Sibsagar... { 1896 ...	39,564	248	122	287	78	139	254	572	1,700	42·9
1895 ...	*37,004*	*226*	*117*	*415*	*111*	*174*	...	*599*	*1,642*	*44·2*
Lakhimpur { 1896 ...	40,341	226	130	388	158	144	123	626	1,795	44·4
1895 ...	*37,154*	*276*	*151*	*368*	*135*	*222*	*135*	*446*	*1,733*	*46·6*
Total ... { 1896 ...	131,089	858	405	1,259	515	657	647	1,657	5,998	45·7
1895 ...	*121,812*	*1,107*	*471*	*1,424*	*620*	*789*	*424*	*1,481*	*6,316*	*52·8*
1894 ...	*118,164*	*1,068*	*445*	*1,467*	*494*	*627*	*289*	*1,588*	*5,778*	*48·9*

N. B—The death rate for each half-year has been calculated separately, and the mean is shown in column 11.

The improvement as compared with 1895 is due to a large reduction in the deaths from cholera (242), dysentery (165), diarrhœa (66), malarial fever (105), and anæmia (132); on the other hand, there was a greater mortality from respiratory diseases (223) and other causes (176). There must be some mistake in the Cachar returns, which show no deaths from diarrhœa or respiratory diseases. Mr. Cotton is impressed by the relatively small proportion of deaths ascribed to malarial fevers, but doubtless many of the deaths from dysentery and respiratory diseases are in reality attributable to malarial affections, of which the last mentioned diseases are the sequelæ.

70. The following table shows the recorded causes of death among non-Act adult coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death amongst non-Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of non-Act coolies employed in 1896.	Deaths from							Total of deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies, or anchylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ...	1896	67,883	300	...	515	406	200	123	387	1,931	28·4
	1895	61,581	250	325	425	396	34	115	85	1,730	28·2
Sylhet ...	1896	69,508	295	246	637	325	132	141	767	2,543	36·5
	1895	59,975	209	195	586	290	126	137	774	2,317	38·5
Kamrup ...	1896	2,096	14	3	8	10	25	4	12	76	36·3
	1895	1,773	7	1	4	25	5	2	13	57	32·1
Darrang ...	1896	17,727	65	29	40	27	59	29	83	332	18·7
	1895	16,092	43	28	52	33	49	70	56	331	20·5
Nowgong ...	1896	7,470	22	10	25	130	16	10	84	297	39·7
	1895	7,323	21	10	34	163	13	33	59	333	45·4
Sibsagar ...	1896	38,326	123	68	174	74	48	99	399	985	25·6
	1895	36,406	118	82	173	94	51	...	409	927	25·5
Lakhimpur ...	1896	32,363	101	81	218	98	51	95	454	1,098	33·9
	1895	29,536	136	65	196	73	69	93	299	931	31·5
Total ...	1896	235,373	920	437	1,617	1,070	531	501	2,186	7,262	30·8
	1895	212,486	884	706	1,470	1,074	347	450	1,695	6,626	31·2
	1894	192,603	879	478	1,064	800	290	280	2,057	5,848	30·3

There has been a slight reduction in the total death-rate amongst non-Act coolies. There were fewer deaths from diarrhœa, but more from dysentery, anæmia, and other causes. Cachar again shows no deaths as due to diarrhœa and a large increase in the number of deaths from anæmia.

71. The following statement shows the causes of death and the death-rate among children (*i.e.*, from birth to sixteen years of age) during each of the past two years:

Death-rate amongst children.

District.	Mean strength of children in 1896.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Total of 1895.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.	
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies, or anchylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.			1896.	1895.
0 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	43,350	141	...	482	109	113	89	300	1,240	1,228	28·5	29·0
Sylhet	57,044	168	126	251	297	30	46	318	1,226	1,154	23·34	24·8
Kamrup	1,158	4	2	1	8	5	3	9	30	45	25·4	39·0
Darrang	10,133	39	36	44	21	25	28	52	255	289	12·6	15·7
Nowgong	6,012	8	7	44	204	7	4	78	252	187	41·7	31·7
Sibsagar	48,413	90	86	209	217	21	49	414	1,086	1,028	22·3	23·2
Lakhimpur	33,799	57	69	243	174	43	47	300	933	867	27·5	26·6
Total of 1896	204,050	487	325	1,281	930	243	274	1,472	5,022	4,798	24·3	...
Total of 1895	192,534	520	520	1,085	1,014	171	130	1,250	4,708	...	...	24·9

The ratio of deaths per mille of children of 16 years and under was 24·3, against 24·9 in 1895 and 22·7 in 1894. These figures, however, are quite unreliable. Special attention should be given to this subject in the Darrang and Sibsagar districts, where the neglect to register the deaths of children is most marked. The Cachar return again shows no deaths from diarrhœa and an extraordinarily large number of deaths as due to anæmia.

Mortality according to country of origin.

72. The following statement illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies distributed according to nationality :

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and Non-Act labourers.		Deaths among adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.	
		1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1836.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bengal, Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men	153,738	153,633	2,847	2,892	37·0	34·9
	Women ...			2,849	2,659		
Bengal, Behar ...	Men	24,252	26,074	782	450	55·0	33·8
	Women ..			552	430		
Bengal, Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men	66,206	68,846	770	871	25·4	25·3
	Women ...			910	877		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Men	56,637	67,208	1,716	1,643	51·1	45·9
	Women ...			1,174	1,155		
Central Provinces ..	Men	7,925	18,180	423	895	85·9	84·1
	Women ...			271	588		
Madras ...	Men	9,061	9,347	174	152	41·6	30·2
	Women ...			202	131		
Assam ...	Men	16,104	17,560	172	130	16·0	11·5
	Women ...			85	75		
Total ...	Men	174,226	192,272	6,891	7,045	40·7	36·6
	Women ...	160,072	174,188	6,051	6,215	37·7	35·6
Grand total ...	...	334,798	366,460	12,942	13,260	38·7	36·1

N.B.—The deaths amongst coolies from Bombay (2 males) and Nepal (10 males) are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is too small to strike a percentage on.

The Central Provinces still claims the highest death-rate. This is no doubt due chiefly to the fact that it is a new recruiting ground, and that the proportion of new arrivals is very large, and the number of old acclimatised coolies very small. The Chief Commissioner has reason to believe that during the current year there has been a further large influx of immigrants from the Central Provinces, and, if so, it is not likely that the death-rate will be materially reduced in 1897, although this will doubtless occur as soon as the immigrant population includes a normal proportion of old acclimatised settlers. But, as stated in last year's report, there are many parts of Assam which are unsuited to the constitutions of the inhabitants of the plains of Upper India, and in dealing with the reports on unhealthy gardens, this fact is duly taken into consideration, and gardens are closed to Act labourers from these parts, wherever the mortality amongst them is found to be unduly high. It has not, however, been hitherto sufficiently realised that the immigrants from the Central Provinces comprise two utterly different classes of coolies,—the aboriginal hill and forest tribes, who are probably just as well suited for residence and work in Assam as the inhabitants of Sontalia and Chota Nagpur, on the one hand, and on the other, the people of the plains, who resemble in their physical characteristics the immigrants from Behar and the North-Western Provinces.

73. Another matter which is not sufficiently attended to is the extent to which the mortality amongst coolies from Upper India is due to an unsuitable diet. Many of them are, in their own country, accustomed to a wheat diet, and the sudden change to a diet consisting of rice has probably quite as much to do with the high mortality amongst these coolies as the change from a dry to a damp climate. The Chief Commissioner would invite the careful attention of inspecting officers and of the planting community to the following remarks of Dr. Rogers in Appendix I to his recent report on *kalá ázár* :

In this connection the great prevalence of anæmia among North-West and Central Provinces wheat-eating coolies is of considerable interest, for, as already mentioned, they suffer so much from this disease that many managers will not employ them at all. Now, Dr. DeRenzy pointed

out, when he was Sanitary Commissioner of Assam some years ago, that coolies from these provinces had just as high a death-rate, and sometimes even a higher one, in the plantations of the West Indies, as they still have in Assam, until compulsory dieting for two years was enforced by Government. From that time their death-rate fell until it reached only 2 or 3 per cent. It is also a commonly-held opinion in Assam that the North-West coolies suffer owing to their great love of saving every pice they can, even to the extent of underfeeding themselves. This is certainly true in as far as they will live on the cheaper rice, rather than incur the much greater expense of obtaining the higher-priced and more nitrogenous grains to which they have always been accustomed. But we know that the Bengali will subsist and keep his health on a diet which consists nearly entirely of rice, and the quantity that he consumes is extraordinary. This means that he is eating a much larger quantity of carbonaceous food elements than his system requires, in order to obtain sufficient of the nitrogenous food elements to keep him in health, and, although this is a physiologically wasteful method of feeding, yet he is accustomed to it, and can in this way supply all his wants. When, however, he gets any illness, such as fever, etc., which will prevent his digesting these enormous masses of rice, he very rapidly runs down, which shows that he has not much stamina. The wheat-eating coolie, on the other hand, is not accustomed to consuming such great quantities of food, owing to the amount of wheat and *dal* that he eats taking the place of a much larger quantity of rice, and so, when he suddenly finds himself in a country where wheat can only be obtained at a prohibitively dear price, then he has to fall back on eating a larger bulk of rice, which he is scarcely able to hold in his stomach, and can only digest with great difficulty. This throws an extra strain on his digestive powers, to which he only too often succumbs. He is now unable to get sufficient nitrogen out of his diet, and soon becomes anæmic, and unless he is caught early and fed up in an "hotel system," he goes from bad to worse. In fact, I believe it would pay any garden which employs a large number of this class of coolies, to feed them on the "hotel system" for at least the first six months, or, better still, until after the first rainy season is past. This is, I know, done in some few cases, but it might with advantage be carried out much more extensively. In one or two cases in which I have seen this done, the cost of the diet was deducted from the pay of the coolie with his consent, and the balance was ample to supply him with the little comforts which he loves, and both parties were greatly benefited by the arrangement.

Rule 146 of the rules under Act I of 1882 lays down that employers in the Sylhet district are bound to supply flour to their coolies at Rs. 4-4-0 per maund, but it is doubtful how far this rule is observed. Moreover, now that wheat-eating coolies are to be found in all districts, it seems desirable that the rule should be made general throughout the province. This matter will receive the immediate attention of the Chief Commissioner, and in the meantime Civil Surgeons will be directed to report, when the mortality is high amongst the wheat-eating classes of coolies, whether the employer has fed them on a flour diet, on the "hotel system," and, if not, whether he supplies them with flour on payment at a fixed rate per maund.

Proportion of unhealthy gardens.

74. The following statement shows the number and proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district during the last two years. Gardens are classed as unhealthy, on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., and the number of deaths from which the average is struck is not less than 10:

District.	Number of gardens.		Number of unhealthy gardens.		Percentage to unhealthy gardens.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	190	189	18	4	9·4	2·1
Sylhet	130*	134†	8	5	6·1	3·7
Kamrup	29	30	2	1	6·9	3·3
Darrang	85	88	16	6	18·8	6·8
Nowgong	54	54	8	10	14·8	18·5
Sibsagar	177	168	9	9	5·0	5·3
Lakhimpur	141	142	9	11	6·3	7·7
Total	806	805	70	46	8·7	5·7

* Exclusive of two gardens, which did not submit returns Nos. 50 and 51.

† Exclusive of one ditto ditto.

Previous to 1889, only those gardens were placed on the unhealthy list which were unhealthy in respect of the total population. For the purpose of comparison, the following table is added, showing the number of unhealthy gardens in each district

during the years 1882 to 1896, *i.e.*, since Act I of 1882 came into force, classified according to the method in force before 1889 :

District.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar	3	5	9	1	10	7	7	12	1	5	8	3	2	...	2
Sylhet	...	14	15	18	13	5	4	10	1	3	3	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	2	2	3	3	...	...	2	1	8	4	5	1	1	1	...
Darrang	14	14	14	9	8	10	12	10	2	5	12	...	...	3	2
Nowgong	16	14	16	3	4	2	2	6	2	3	5	5	7	...	1
Sibsagar	7	11	25	5	15	10	21	18	11	6	14	1	6	2	...
Lakhimpur	15	13	11	3	14	15	17	12	5	4	8	4	5	5	5
Total	57*	73†	93‡	42§	64	49	65	69	28	30	55	14	27	11	10

* Of these, 13 gardens had less than 10 deaths each.
† This includes two camps, in which coolies recruited by a Local board, were located.
‡ The number of deaths on three gardens was less than 10.
§ The number of deaths on two gardens was less than 10.

The number of gardens unhealthy in respect of the total population was less than in any previous year. The number classed as unhealthy under one or other of the three tests now applied is also smaller than it has ever been before; only 46 were so classed, against an average of 77 in the preceding three years. It may be explained that the large number of gardens unhealthy on the Act or non-Act population taken separately is due, partly to the smaller numbers on which the death percentages are calculated, with the result that greater fluctuations occur in the percentages, and partly to the fact that it is the practice on most gardens to have recourse to the provisions of the Act chiefly in the case of new and unacclimatised labourers serving their first periods in Assam, the bulk of the labour force remaining either under contracts under Act XIII of 1859 or as free labourers without contracts of any sort. Mortality is invariably greater amongst new importations than amongst coolies who have been long settled in Assam, and, although the Chief Commissioner hopes to see it greatly reduced by the measures which are being taken to improve the conditions under which they travel to the province, it is not to be expected that new coolies will ever show as low a death-rate as old ones who have gone through the process of acclimatisation, and have grown accustomed to the changed conditions of life, and especially of climate and food.

75. In the following paragraphs a detailed account is given of the gardens which were unhealthy in each district, of the causes of the mortality which occurred, and of the action taken by the Chief Commissioner in each case. It should be understood that the figures given in the statements which follow, refer only to that portion of the labour force of each garden in respect of which the garden is unhealthy. The death-rate for the year (column 5) is the sum of the death-rates for each half-year taken separately and calculated on the mean labour force of the half-year :

76. *CACHAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fevers.	Anæmia of coolies or *anchylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	*Other causes.*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Chandowa ...	68	20	294·4	2	4	4	7	3	...	...
	2. Ainakhal ...	443	60	135·9	7	1	28	...	20	...	4
	Total (Act) ...	511	80	158·3	9	5	32	7	23	...	4
Non-Act population ...	*Nil.*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Act and non-Act population taken together.	3. Ratanpur... ...	280	66	235·0	17	...	19	9	10	...	11
	4. Paloi	270	82	329·2	52	5	12	4	7	1	1
	Total (Act and non-Act) ...	550	148	291·6	69	5	31	13	17	1	12

(1) *Chandowa.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1895, and the excessive mortality was ascribed to the importation of inferior classes of coolies from the North-Western Provinces. The garden was accordingly closed in September 1896 to future importations of coolies from those Provinces and Oudh. It has now again appeared on the unhealthy list, but the Chief Commissioner has decided to defer further action until the mortality returns for the first half-year of 1897 are received, when the effect of the orders passed last year will be seen. If the returns for the first half-year of 1897 show a high mortality, a further inspection will at once be made under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

(2) *Amakhal.*—The record of this garden for unhealthiness is a bad one. It was unhealthy in 1889, 1890, 1893, and 1895. The excessive mortality of 1895 was attributed to the importation of unsuitable and inferior classes of coolies, and the manager was warned of his responsibility for the class of coolies imported by him; but, in spite of this, the Civil Surgeon reports that coolies of inferior physique are still being imported, and that the sanitary arrangements of the garden are still defective. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of all classes of Act labourers, and has directed that it shall be closed to such labour.

(3) *Ratanpur.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1893 and 1895 as well as in 1896. A committee was held in May 1897, and their unanimous finding was that neither the whole estate nor any portion of it was unfit for the residence of labourers generally, or of any particular class of labourers. The committee attributed the high death-rate to the importation of an inferior class of labourers and to the coolies' own neglect to feed themselves properly. The finding of the committee, being unanimous, is final, but the attention of the Deputy Commissioner has been drawn to the fact that the importation of bad batches of coolies cannot be accepted as an excuse for high mortality, and he has been requested to ask the Civil Surgeon to inspect the garden at an early date under section 130 of the Act and to enquire carefully into the causes of the heavy death-rate.

(4) *Paloi.*—This is a new garden, opened only in 1895. In that year, the death-rate amongst Act coolies was 33·20 per cent., and in 1896 it was 32·92 per cent. This mortality is appalling, and, although it was due largely to two outbreaks of cholera, and some allowance should be made for the fact that the clearance is a new one, the manager appears to have been to some extent remiss in making proper arrangements for the accommodation of his labour force, and in no case could the Chief Commissioner allow coolies to be imported under the Act for a garden with such a terrible death-rate. The mortality occurred chiefly amongst new coolies, and Mr. Cotton has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of all Act labourers who have been less than a year in the province, and has directed that it should be closed to such labourers. The effect of these orders is that no coolie must be employed on the garden under the Act until he has been at least one year in the province. If a very marked improvement is not shown in the returns for the current year, the benefit of the Act will be withdrawn altogether from this garden.

77. *SYLHET*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.							Other causes.
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial Fever.	Anæmia of colic, ankylosto-miasis.	Respiratory dis-eases.		
1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11		12
Act population	1. Sylhet-Tipperah ...	157	16	...	...	4	2	...	2	1		7
Non-Act population	2. Bhagicherra ...	693	110	124·5	6	41	32	11	8	3		16
	3. Adamtila ...	1,062	73	70·6	5	2	38	7	34	...		18
	4. Bhubunghat ...	911	80	87·5	16	7	21	11	1	...		30
	5. Champabari ...	861	152	100·2	2	23	77	9	...	...		41
	Total (non-Act) ...	3,742	421	111·4	23	73	167	38	12	3		105
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*											

(1) *Sylhet-Tipperah.*—This is a new garden. It was opened only in 1894, and the population now consists of 180 Act and 2,482 non-Act coolies. It came on the unhealthy list for the first time in 1896 owing to the heavy Act death-rate, but was not unhealthy on the Act and non-Act population taken together. The arrangements on the garden are, on the whole, good, and the death-rate for the first quarter of 1897 was very low. No action was therefore considered necessary beyond seeing that the Civil Surgeon's recommendations are carried out.

(2) *Bhagicherra.*—This garden was unhealthy on the non-Act population. The manager of the garden has been requested to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations. The garden is a comparatively new one, and the Chief Commissioner will await the results of 1897 before deciding what action should be taken in regard to it.

(3) *Adamtila.*—The garden has no Act coolies. It has never before appeared on the unhealthy list. The medical and sanitary arrangements are satisfactory.

(4) *Bhubirghat*, (5) *Champabari*.—These gardens also have no Act labourers, and the Local Administration has, therefore, no power of control. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to use his influence to induce the managers of the gardens to carry out recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon in order to remedy the defects noticed by him.

78. *KAMRUP*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cooles from malarial intermits.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	Luri	86	14	164·5	3	...	...	...	8	3	...
Non-Act ,, ...	*Nil.*										
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*										

The Luri tea garden appeared for the first time on the unhealthy list, and 3 of the 14 deaths were caused by *kalá ázár*. A committee was held on the 16th March 1897, and recorded a finding that the garden is not unfit for the residence of any class of labourers now employed. The sanitary arrangements were good, and all the recommendations made by inspecting officers had been carried out.

79. *DARRANG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Dysentery.	Diarrhœa.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies from malarial intermits.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Tarajuli ...	588	43	74·3	9	4	5	...	19	6	...
	2. Diplonga ...	194	22	113·4	6	3	1	...	6	7	1
	3. Orangajuli ...	152	21	144·7	6	1	3	3	1	3	4
	4. Khairabari ...	186	33	176·6	...	26	3	...	..	...	4
	Total (Act) ...	1,120	119	106·8	20	33	12	3	26	16	9
Non-Act population	5. Partabgarh ...	529	37	71·3	1	17	1	...	1	9	8
Act and non-Act population taken together.	6. Majbat or Gelladung.	333	24	73·7	17	3	...	1	...	2	1

(1) *Tarajuli*.—This garden was unhealthy on both Act and non-Act population in 1895. In that year the mortality was ascribed to the large proportion of newly-imported labourers among the labour force. The arrangements on the garden, however, were reported to be good, and the only recommendation made was that the hospital in course of erection should be hurried on. This recommendation has been carried out, and the Civil Surgeon has no further improvements to suggest. In view of the great improvement in the statistics of mortality since 1895, no special action was considered necessary until the death-rate of the current year is known.

(2) *Diplonga*.—This garden has been unhealthy every year since 1891, except in 1894. A committee was held on it in 1894, and recorded a finding that the garden was unfit for the residence of labourers from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. It was accordingly closed to labourers of this class. The mortality, however, was again excessive in 1895, and the Chief Commissioner issued orders that if it continued in 1896, another committee should be summoned. A second committee was accordingly held. A unanimous finding was come to that the garden was not unfit for the residence of any class of labourers, except those from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, to whom it had already been closed. The Chief Commissioner was obliged under the law to accept this finding, but he has ordered that the mortality should be carefully watched, and that the Civil Surgeon should inspect the garden under section 130 of the Act towards the close of the year.

(3) *Orangajuli*.—This garden has not been unhealthy before. The excessive mortality appears to have been due to some extent to the importation of cholera by new coolies. It is doubtful, however, whether sufficient care was observed in the

selection of recruits. The condition of the garden appears, on the whole, to be satisfactory, but the wages of the Act labourers, and especially those of the men, were low, and the number of desertions was large. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the Commissioner's recommendation that the returns of the mortality for 1897 should be awaited before deciding whether action is called for under section 132 of the Act, but has invited his attention to these points, and has directed that extra visits of inspection should be paid to the garden.

(4) *Khairabari.*—This is a new garden. It was unhealthy on the Act population, owing chiefly to the heavy mortality amongst coolies from the North-Western Provinces, and the Civil Surgeon is of opinion that the garden is unsuitable for the residence of such labourers. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of labourers from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and directed that it shall be closed to such labourers.

(5) *Partabgarh.*—The garden, which was unhealthy also in 1893 and 1894, was unhealthy in 1896 in respect of the non-Act population. The mortality was confined almost exclusively to non-Act adults. It appears to be the practice to place only healthy adults under Act contracts, and the mortality amongst the remainder was therefore high. The accuracy of the returns of the births and deaths of coolies submitted from this garden is questionable, and an enquiry has been ordered with a view to ascertain whether they are correct or not. The arrangements in respect of sanitation and medical matters appear to be good, and no action is called for in these respects.

(6) *Majbat.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden. Its appearance on the unhealthy list was due solely to an outbreak of cholera introduced by new arrivals. There is, however, no proper hospital and no qualified medical officer, and steps have been taken to remedy these defects.

80. *NOWGONG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	Causes of death. Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	*Kala dasir.*	Anæmia, Cachexia, and Splenic enlargement.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Nelli ...	140	12	85·6	...	...	1	1	1	...	7
	2. Kulkusi ...	85	11	129·4	3	...	5	...	3	2	6
	3. Odmari ...	111	15	135·5	...	2	1	1	7	2	2
	4. Old Salona ...	101	11	109·4	...	...	1	...	9	1	1
	5. Diju Valley ...	411	40	97·4	3	4	7	2	3	14	7
	Total (Act) ...	948	97	102·9	6	6	17	4	23	18	23
Non-Act population ...	6. Rengheng ...	276	29	105·1	...	...	...	2	27	...	...
	7. Borghat ...	575	41	70·9	1	1	7	5	19	2	6
	8. New Salona ...	606	46	75·5	2	2	15	4	13	2	8
	9. Sagmutia ...	151	13	86·5	...	3	2	3	...	1	4
	Total (non-Act) ...	1,608	129	80·1	3	6	24	14	59	5	18
Act and non-Act population taken together	10. Owguri ...	85	12	143·5	...	...	...	...	4	1	7

(1) *Nelli.*—This garden has only once been unhealthy before,—in 1891. The present excessive mortality occurred amongst a batch of unsuitable coolies imported in March 1896. The garden has since changed hands, and the present manager appears to be aware of his responsibility for the class of coolies he imports. The arrangements on the garden are, on the whole, good, and no special action was necessary.

(2) *Kulkusi.*—Owing to repeated unhealthiness, this garden was closed last year to all further importations under the Act, and the heavy death-rate in 1896 occurred amongst labourers imported before the orders closing the garden were issued. The mortality during the year was very heavy amongst the Act coolies from the North-Western Provinces, and the garden is obviously unsuited to labourers of this class. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of labourers from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and has directed that it shall be closed

to such labourers. The effect of these orders is that the contracts of all North-Western Provinces coolies now on the garden will be cancelled. The Civil Surgeon reports that all his previous recommendations have been carried out. He also makes certain further recommendations, and these must be given effect to at once.

(3) *Udmari.*—The circumstances of this garden were carefully considered last year in connection with the high death-rate in 1895. The garden was healthy in 1893 and 1894, and came on to the unhealthy list in 1895 in consequence of an outbreak of *kalá ázár*. It was reported, however, that prompt action had been taken by the management, and that the disease showed signs of diminishing. The Chief Commissioner decided to await a further report before taking action. The garden was again inspected in November 1896, and, in view of the improvement in the death-rate reported by the Civil Surgeon, action under section 132 was again postponed. The Civil Surgeon reports that *kalá ázár* has now practically disappeared. The arrangements on the garden are stated to be excellent, and there seems reason to think that the garden will be healthy in 1897. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly decided to await the results of the current year before coming to a final conclusion regarding this garden.

(4) *Old Salona.*—In consequence of repeated unhealthiness, this garden was closed last year to Act labour; but in the special circumstances of the case, the order of closure was directed to have effect from the 1st January 1897. The mortality in 1896 was almost entirely due to *kalá ázár*, and the disease shows no sign of diminishing. The general arrangements are good, but the number of desertions was excessive. The lines have recently been partially removed to a new site, and it is hoped that this will lead to a reduced death-rate.

(5) *Diju Valley.*—The garden is ordinarily a healthy one, and no particular cause has been assigned for the excessive mortality in 1896. There were 14 deaths from *anchylostomiasis*. The Civil Surgeon's recommendations with regard to the drainage and hospital fittings should be carried out. No further action is necessary at present.

(6) *Rengbeng.*—This is a small non-Act garden, worked entirely by Assamese and Garo labourers. It came on the unhealthy list for the first time in 1895 in consequence of the appearance of *kalá ázár*. The coolies are an uncivilized set of people, who refuse to take European medicines, and pin their faith on sacrifices to demons, etc. *Kalá ázár* is still raging, and the death-rate for the current year is already greater than 7 per cent. The garden, however, appears to be well managed, and the Civil Surgeon has no recommendations to make.

(7) *Borghat.*—This garden was healthy in 1895 and unhealthy on non-Act population in 1896. The unhealthiness was due to *kalá ázár*, which now appears to be on the decline. The arrangements on the garden are generally good, and wages are high.

(8) *New Salona.*—The garden was unhealthy on non-Act population owing to the prevalence of *kalá ázár*. No cure for this intractable disease has yet been discovered, but the garden authorities appear to be taking all possible steps to check its progress. The wages are good, and the general sanitary conditions are satisfactory. The Civil Surgeon makes some minor suggestions for their improvement, and these should be given effect to. Of late years prior to 1896, 1894 is the only year in which the garden was unhealthy.

(9) *Sagmutia.*—The record of this garden for unhealthiness during the past four years is a bad one. It had a death-rate of over 11 per cent. in 1893 and 1894 in respect of the Act, and in 1895 in respect of the non-Act, population. In 1896, the Act death-rate was 6·47 per cent., or only 0·53 under the 7 per cent. limit, and the non-Act rate was 8·65 per cent. The number of cases in which fractions of the daily task were shown in the attendance register was very large, and the number of desertions (53) was excessive. These are unsatisfactory symptoms; but as the excessive mortality occurred in respect of the non-Act population, the garden cannot be closed under section 132 of the Act, and the Chief Commissioner has, therefore, ordered a committee to be held under section 128A.

(10) *Owguri.*—This is a small garden with a population of less than 100 souls, and was unhealthy on the Act and non-Act population taken together. The Civil Surgeon reports that the mortality was not due to any want of care or sanitary precautions on the part of the management. No special action was considered necessary.

81. *SIBSAGAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cachexiæ or paralysis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Sonari ...	218	16	73·3	5	1	1	...	2	...	7
	2. Towkok ...	791	77	109·6	29	5	14	...	15	...	14
	3. Khumtai (Sadr)	346	31	91·9	...	1	8	1	...	...	21
	4. Rajabari (Lakwa Tea Company.)	163	12	73·7	...	...	2	1	3	...	6
	5. Naginijan ...	217	24	109·9	9	...	3	2	...	...	10
	6. Hulunguri ...	245	19	77·8	4	...	3	4	...	...	8
	7. Noahabari ...	184	13	70·3	3	1	...	...	1	...	8
	8. Chotajan ...	110	10	90·1	...	2	6	...	...	...	2
	Total (Act) ...	2,184	202	92·4	50	10	37	8	21	...	76
Non-Act population	9. Sangsua ...	562	41	71·4	1	3	18	5	2	...	12
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*										

(1) *Sonari.*—This garden has appeared on the unhealthy list for the first time for some years past. The high mortality in 1896 was due to an outbreak of cholera which was introduced from the neighbouring *hât*, and which the manager took prompt action to stamp out. The arrangements on the garden are good and sufficient, except that the labour force appears to be somewhat inadequate, and the Commissioner has been requested to advise the manager of the garden to increase it.

(2) *Towkok.*—This garden has been healthy since 1889, with the exception of 1892, when its mortality just exceeded 7 per cent. Its high Act mortality in 1896, like that of the Sonari garden, was due chiefly to the introduction of cholera from the Sonari *hât*. The Civil Surgeon reported that the garden was fit for the residence of all classes of labourers, but he suggested certain improvements in the hospital arrangements. These suggestions were ordered to be carried out.

(3) *Khumtai.*—This garden is ordinarily a healthy one. An outbreak of pneumonia towards the close of the year was the main cause of the high death-rate in 1896. The Civil Surgeon at his inspection pointed out some defects in the water-supply and the hospital and vaccination system, but found the arrangements generally good, and recorded a finding that the estate is fit for the residence of all classes of labourers. The Commissioner has been requested to see that the Civil Surgeon's recommendations for removing the defects noticed by him are given effect to.

(4) *Rajabari.*—This garden appears on the unhealthy list for the first time. The high mortality was caused by an outbreak of influenza. No special action was considered necessary.

(5) *Naginijan.*—The garden has not been unhealthy since 1892. The heavy death-rate in 1896 was caused by two epidemics—one of cholera and the other of influenza. The garden arrangements are reported to be excellent, and the Civil Surgeon had no recommendations to make for their improvement.

(6) *Hulunguri.*—This is ordinarily a very healthy garden, and was brought on to the unhealthy list owing to the introduction of cholera by new coolies. The sanitary and general arrangements were reported to be good, and no special action was necessary.

(7) *Noahabari.*—This also is ordinarily a healthy garden. The Civil Surgeon had no recommendations to make, except the speedy completion of the measures already undertaken by the manager for the improvement of the water-supply.

(8) *Chotajan.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1894 and 1895, as well as in the year under review. In his report last year the Civil Surgeon condemned the garden arrangements in several respects, and the manager was then warned that, unless there was an improvement, the garden would be closed to Act labour. The result is satisfactory, for the death-rate in the second half-year of 1896 showed a marked diminution, and its appearance on the unhealthy list is in consequence of the deaths which took place in the first half-year before the warning had been communicated. All the Civil Surgeon's recommendations have now been carried out, and the death-rate for the first four months of 1897 is low. Wages are now high, and the manager is taking steps to remedy such defects as remain in the water-supply. The Chief Commissioner has, therefore, decided to await the returns of mortality for 1897 before deciding whether it is necessary to close the garden.

(9) *Sangsua.*—This ordinarily healthy garden was unhealthy on the non-Act population in 1896 owing to an outbreak of measles among the children. The Civil Surgeon reports that the arrangements on the garden are good, and he has no recommendations to make for their improvement. Wages, however, are low, and this point is being enquired into.

The following action was also taken in 1896 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1895:

Moriani.—The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Act in November 1896. The Chief Commissioner was not satisfied with the arrangements on the garden as disclosed by the Civil Surgeon's report, and ordered a further inspection to be made by him. The garden was accordingly again inspected in April 1897. It was found to have been healthy in 1896, and considerable improvements were reported to have been effected. In view, however, of its past record, the garden will continue to receive special attention.

Hatikuli.—Owing to repeated unhealthiness, a committee was held on this garden in November 1895. The committee recorded a unanimous finding that the garden was not unfit for the residence of labourers, but they made several recommendations for the improvement of the sanitary arrangements, and especially of the water-supply, and made their finding conditional on these recommendations being carried out. When the finding of the committee came before the Chief Commissioner last year, he ordered the garden to be inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of the Act, before the end of the year. It was accordingly inspected in December 1896, by the Civil Surgeon, who found that the committee's recommendations had all been carried out, and that the mortality had greatly diminished. As the garden was healthy in 1896, no further steps were taken.

82. *LAKHIMPUR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of estate.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *cachexia africana*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Rungagora ...	220	15	72·3	3	...	4	3	...	1	4
	2. Hatiali ...	331	36	107·7	17	...	11	1	...	5	2
	3. Dikhari and Naharani.	206	13	70·7	4	...	1	...	1	2	5
	4. Longpeal ...	897	65	72·7	2	7	21	5	...	9	21
	5. Nahorkutia ...	135	11	83·5	...	...	5	...	...	2	4
	Total (Act) ...	1,789	140	78·1	26	7	42	9	1	19	36
Non-Act population ...	6. Tikak ...	642	77	131·4	...	11	47	1	...	...	18
	7. Margherita headquarters.	1,138	94	82·5	11	6	34	7	...	3	33
	8. Hisskupi ...	816	71	87·3	...	3	10	13	...	4	41
	9. Dijoo ...	1,177	102	86·7	4	1	40	2	...	11	44
	10. Dirpai ...	172	19	106·1	...	4	5	...	...	2	8
	Total (non-Act) ...	3,945	363	92·0	15	25	136	23	...	20	144
Act and non-Act population taken together.	11. Dighultarang ...	325	26	75·9	3	7	9	4	...	3	...

(1) *Rungagora.*—This garden appears for the first time on the unhealthy list. The excessive mortality was caused by serious cases of sickness having been brought in from the out-gardens and treated at the hospital at headquarters, and by the deaths of such persons having been shown against the headquarters garden.

(2) *Hatiali.*—The Civil Surgeon inspected this garden, which was unhealthy also in 1890 and 1894, and came to the conclusion that it was not unfit for the residence of any class of labourers. He noticed, however, several defects in the management of the garden, especially in the hospital and segregation arrangements, the quantity and quality of the food, and the wages earned by the coolies. A copy of the Civil Surgeon's report was sent to the manager of the garden, who was directed to carry out the recommendations made therein at an early date, his special attention being invited to the remarks made regarding the lowness of the wages earned. The Chief Commissioner will await the results of the year 1897 before deciding whether it is necessary or not to take action under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

(3) *Dikhari and Naharani.*—These gardens, though healthy since 1892, had a bad record previous to that year. The chief defects disclosed by the Civil Surgeon's report are the defective medical arrangements and the low wages earned by the coolies,

With regard to the former, it appears that since the date of the Civil Surgeon's inspection a hospital has been built and a hotel started for feeding new and sickly coolies. The low rate of wages paid was due largely to the fact that the coolies are allowed leave freely for the cultivation of paddy on their own account. The manager has been warned that if the high mortality continues, it will be necessary to take steps with a view to close these gardens to Act labour.

(4) *Longsoal.*—This garden was last "unhealthy" in 1892. The Civil Surgeon reported some serious defects. The supervision of the hospital was found to be insufficient, the house accommodation indifferent, and the water-supply and drainage defective. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the Civil Surgeon's proposal to make a further inspection before recording a definite finding as to the fitness of the estate for the residence of labourers. In the meantime the manager has been called on to give immediate effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, and he has since reported that they have already been carried out as far as is possible during the rainy season, and that what remains to be done will be completed during the ensuing cold weather.

(5) *Nahorkutia.*—This garden has not been unhealthy since 1887. It has recently changed hands, and steps are being taken to greatly increase the area under cultivation. The arrangements for the well-being of the coolies have not kept pace with the rate at which new labourers have been imported, and the Civil Surgeon has recommended various improvements. Orders have been issued that all his recommendations must be carried out.

(6) *Tikak.*—This coal-mine was closed to all Act labour in 1896 in consequence of repeated excessive mortality. As there are now no Act coolies on the estate, there are no longer any legal means of enforcing sanitary improvements. It is reported, however, that the Assam Railways and Trading Company, Limited, are doing all in their power to reduce the mortality. Amongst other improvements introduced, three large reservoirs, each of 50,000 gallons capacity, for filtered water have been constructed, and it is hoped that this and the clearance of jungle in the locality and the conversion of it into cultivated land, will improve the health of the settlement.

(7) *Margherita.*—The mortality at this, the headquarters station of the Assam Railways and Trading Company, has been excessive for many years. In 1896, the estate was healthy on the Act, but unhealthy on the non-Act, population. The Company appear to be sparing no trouble or expense to improve the health of their employés, and the Chief Commissioner has accepted the suggestion made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that the Deputy Commissioner should be directed to inspect the estate in conjunction with the Civil Surgeon towards the close of the year, with a view to seeing what progress has been made in improving the sanitary conditions of the place.

(8) *Bisakupi.*—This garden, which appeared on the unhealthy list in 1889, 1892, and 1894, was unhealthy in 1896 on the non-Act population, due chiefly to an epidemic of influenza which carried off a large number of children. No special action was considered necessary, beyond calling the manager's attention to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations as to the care to be taken of the children.

(9) *Dijoo.*—This garden had been unhealthy three times since 1886. Of the 102 deaths amongst the non-Act population, in respect of which it was unhealthy in 1896, 74 were those of children. The Civil Surgeon was of opinion that sufficient care was not taken to ensure prompt treatment of cases of sickness amongst children. The manager was directed to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations on the subject.

(10) *Dirpai.*—This garden was unhealthy for the first time. It was unhealthy in respect of the non-Act population. The Civil Surgeon's report disclosed many defects, and the Commissioner has been requested to see that his recommendations for removing them are given effect to at once.

(11) *Dighultarang.*—This is a new garden. The unhealthiness was due partly to new clearances, and partly to the importation of an inferior class of coolies. The manager has been requested to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, and has been warned that he will be held responsible for the class of labourers he imports.

The Rungmulla garden, which was unhealthy in 1895, was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 150 of the Act in November 1896; but in view of the healthiness of the estate during the latter year, no special action was considered necessary.

General conclusions regarding the treatment of unhealthy gardens.

83. A full review of the working of the sections relating to unhealthy gardens was given in paragraph 56 of the report for 1895, and the Chief Commissioner has nothing to add to what is there said. He desires, however, to say that, in the discussions which have taken place regarding the healthiness or otherwise of Assam tea gardens, too much prominence has often been given to the figures for individual gardens or portions of gardens, the population of which is too small to admit of drawing any general conclusions. Just as in any large tract or city the average death-rate is the outcome of

the figures for individual localities, some of which are far above, and some far below, the mean, so also with the tea-garden population, the average death-rate (32 per 1,000 in 1896), is far from being the uniform rate of the gardens which contribute to it, and if there are some gardens with a very high death-rate in a particular year, there are others with an exceptionally low one. The occurrence of a high death-rate on a particular garden, or part of a garden, is held by this Administration to be a reason for a searching enquiry into the causes of the same, and where the garden is found to be unsuited for the residence of labourers generally or particular classes of labourers, or where the high death-rate is due to neglect on the part of the management, the garden is closed to Act coolies. But, in dealing with the general question of the healthiness or otherwise of Assam tea gardens, the death-rate for the whole tea-garden population should alone be considered.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPECTION.

Number of gardens submitting returns and liable to inspection.

84. The number of gardens borne on the inspection register at the end of the year was 848, against 824 at the end of 1895. There was an increase in every district except Nowgong and Sibsagar. In the former district the number was the same as in the previous year, while in the latter there was a decrease of 9 gardens, due to amalgamations and to the erroneous exclusion from the table of a saw-mill which employs Act coolies. In Cachar, there were 25 gardens more than in the previous year, due probably to some small gardens worked by local labour having for the first time been brought on to the register.

Of the 848 gardens on the register, 745 submitted returns. All gardens employing any Act labourers, or more than 50 other persons, are required to submit returns, and are liable to inspection. There were 737 gardens coming under this category, and returns were received from 8 other gardens.

Classification of gardens according to the coolies employed, and inspection of Act and non-Act gardens.

85. The following statement shows the number of gardens classified, district by district, according to the classes of labourers employed, the number which submitted returns, and the number which were inspected during the year:

—	Cachar.					Sylhet.					Kamrup.					Darrang.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.			
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number of gardens ...	97	91	2	41	234	83	52	2	..	135	9	8	1	12	30	79	5	1	3	88
,, sending returns 50 and 51 ...	97	91	2	...	190	81	52	1	...	134	9	8	1	...	18	79	5	1	...	85
,, inspected once	81	90	...	...	171	75	51	...	...	126	6	4	...	2	12	39	5	...	...	64
,, ,, twice	12	...	..	...	12	6	1	...	...	5	2	...	...	...	2	17	...	...	...	17
,, ,, thrice... ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Total number inspected in 1896 ...	94	90	...	...	184	70	52	...	...	122	8	4	...	...	12	59	5	...	...	84
,, ,, ,, in 1895 ...	142	52	1	...	195	83	46	1	...	130	9	9	...	...	18	75	6	...	...	81

—	Nowgong.					Sibsagar.					Lakhimpur.					Total.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.			
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
Number of gardens ...	32	8	...	14	54	133	17	3	15	168	117	8	...	17	142	548	185	9	102	848
,, sending returns 50 and 51 ...	32	8	...	...	40	133	17	3	...	153	117	8	...	...	125	548	185	8	...	745
,, inspected once ...	30	6	...	...	36	122	17	...	...	139	108	8	...	...	116	471	181	...	...	652
,, ,, twice ...	12	2	...	...	14	9	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	65	3	...	...	68
,, ,, thrice ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	6
Total number inspected in 1896 ...	32	8	...	...	40	131	17	...	...	148	117	8	...	...	125	540	184	...	...	724
,, ,, ,, in 1895 ...	32	9	...	...	41	142	10	...	...	152	119	3	1	...	123	502	125	3	...	740

The number of gardens employing Act labourers in Cachar has fallen from 142 out of a total number of 194 gardens employing more than 50 coolies to 97 out of 188. This sudden decrease in the number of gardens having recourse to the provisions of the Act is a matter which should have been fully discussed, but the Deputy Commissioner has allowed it to pass without comment or explanation of any kind. A special report will be called for from him on the subject.

Inspection.

86. Of the 737 gardens liable to inspection, 724 were inspected during the year. The 13 uninspected gardens were distributed as follows: 4 in Cachar, 2 in Sylhet, 5 in Kamrup, and 2 in Sibsagar. No explanation of the reasons for these gardens having remained unvisited is given in the district reports, but it is stated that they were all inspected soon after the close of the year. In districts where the number of gardens is large it may happen that one or two gardens may be left unvisited, owing to accidental causes; but there is no reason why so many as 5 gardens should have remained uninspected in the Kamrup district, where the total number of gardens liable to inspection is only 17.

Gardens inspected twice or oftener.

87. The number of gardens inspected twice or oftener was only 72 (68 twice, 4 three times), against 74 (68 twice, 6 three times) in 1895, and 76 (62 twice, 14 three times) in 1894. The insufficiency of the number of second and third inspections in 1895 was commented on by the Chief Commissioner in last year's report, and the further falling off which has taken place in the number of such inspections is far from satisfactory. Under standing orders, every garden on the "unhealthy" list must be inspected twice during the year. Special visits have also to be paid to gardens for various other reasons, so that the number of gardens inspected twice or thrice should always exceed the number of unhealthy gardens in a district. The results for 1896, viewed in this light, are as follows:

District.	Number of unhealthy gardens in 1895.	Number of gardens inspected more than once in 1896.
Cachar	18	13
Sylhet	8	5
Kamrup	2	2
Darrang	16	20
Nowgong	8	14
Sibsagar	9	9
Lakhimpur	9	9
Total	70	72

Darrang and Nowgong are the only districts in which the number of gardens inspected more than once exceeds the number of gardens unhealthy in 1895, while in Cachar and Sylhet the bare number of visits required by standing orders do not appear to have been paid. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, however, in another portion of his report, states that Mr. Anley, Extra Assistant Commissioner, was deputed towards the end of the year to pay a series of visits to gardens for the purpose of verifying local contracts, and the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet makes a similar statement in regard to a number of gardens in the South Sylhet subdivision. Again, in the footnote to the statement given below, it is stated that of 56 visits of inspection paid by "other inspecting agency in the Lakhimpur district," 26 were special visits made for the purpose of verifying contracts and other purposes. It is clear, therefore, that the number of gardens inspected more than once has been understated in the statement given in paragraph 84.

88. The following table shows the number of gardens inspected, respectively, by Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Civil Surgeons, and other inspecting agency:

District.	Deputy Commissioners.		Assistant Commissioners.		Civil Surgeons.		Other inspecting agency.	
	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar ...	56	71	79	38	30	30	30	45
Sylhet ...	19	7	85	107	9	18	26	4
Kamrup ...	14	7	...	...	4	5	...	...
Darrang ...	12	27	27	26	49	47	7	7
Nowgong, ...	31	10	...	...	22	38	...	6
Sibsagar ...	22	26	71	91	64	38	27	2
Lakhimpur ...	34	19*	46	43	13	33	30	56†
Total ...	188	167	308	305	191	209	120	130

* This includes 2 joint inspections by the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon.
† This includes 26 inspections for verification of contracts and other purposes.

The amount of inspection work done by Deputy Commissioners was somewhat inadequate, especially in the Sylhet, Nowgong, and Lakhimpur districts, and there seems to be a general tendency to make over too great a share of the inspection of healthy and second-class gardens to Civil Surgeons. The orders on the subject of inspections, reproduced in paragraph 58 of the report for 1894, are still in force, but those orders and the remarks made in paragraph 58 of last year's report on the subject of the inspection of second-class gardens, appear to have been disregarded in some districts.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING OF THE SYSTEM GENERALLY.

Relations between employers and labourers.

89. The relations between employers and labourers continued to be, on the whole, satisfactory, but there were several cases in which coolies combined to commit assaults on their employers. As a general rule, these disturbances take place consequent on a change in the management of a garden, the coolies resenting the efforts of the new manager to obtain a higher standard of work than they have been accustomed to. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar describes a case of this nature in his district as follows:

> The manager of the Borjan tea estate in the Golaghat subdivision was waylaid and severely beaten by eleven of his coolies, and eventually had to run for it. The ostensible motive for this assault was the manager's having struck a coolie with a cane for disregard of some orders about hoeing. Disaffection had, however, been brewing for a considerable time, as the coolies were discontented with the change of management which occurred in December, and shortly after the new manager's arrival, his bungalow was burnt down, without doubt, intentionally. This disturbance took place in May, when Babu J. C. Mitra, Extra Assistant Commissioner, was in charge of the Golaghat subdivision. I arrived in Golaghat while the case was under trial, and found some 300 coolies sitting outside the kutcherry, having struck work. These were made to return, and I myself went to the garden to enquire into their grievances. They had nothing definite to complain of, but all objected to the change of management. The conclusion I came to was that a spirit of discontent had become rife, owing to the new manager's attempting to introduce too suddenly stricter methods of work, in ignorance of the independent character of the labour force he had to deal with. The coolies of this garden are, as a whole, exceptionally well off, a great many of them owning land, and are proportionately independent. The eleven persons who took part in the assault on the manager were convicted under section 147, Indian Penal Code, and each sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and to a fine of Rs. 20. No other disturbances on the garden have been reported since. At the end of the year the former manager resumed charge of the garden. I have dealt with this case at some length, as, though it is almost the rule that a collision between the management and the labour force should occur on a change being made in the former, it usually takes place very shortly after the arrival of the new manager, and when tact and firmness are shown on his side, his authority is speedily established; but in this case five months elapsed before matters finally came to a head, a circumstance which shows the rebellion to have been more general and organised than is commonly the case. I have reasons for believing that this was due to the action of some ill-affected persons who had severed their connection with the garden.

This was the only important case reported in the Assam Valley districts, but a case which has not been mentioned by the Deputy Commissioner occurred in the Lakhimpur district, and came to the Chief Commissioner's notice in consequence of a paragraph in the *Hitavadi* newspaper. The Subdivisional Officer, North Lakhimpur, sentenced five coolies of the Joyhing tea estate, four to five months', and one to nine months', rigorous imprisonment under section 147, Indian Penal Code. The Chief Commissioner sent for the records of the case, from which it appeared that the riot occurred in consequence of the coolies being required to work on Sunday, or seven days of the week, which is contrary to the provisions of section 116 of Act I of 1882. The sentences of the four coolies sentenced to five months' imprisonment had expired just before the records were received, but Mr. Cotton ordered the immediate release of the remaining coolie who had been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. The Deputy Commissioner will be called on to explain his failure to refer to this case in his annual Immigration Report. No case was reported from any district in which a manager was convicted of any act of oppression or high-handedness towards his employés.

Relations between the garden population and the villagers.

90. The district reports show that, generally speaking, the garden population live on amicable terms with the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. Only one case, also from the Sibsagar district, of serious friction between an outsider and the general body of the coolies on a garden is reported. The Deputy Commissioner writes—

> The only case reported in which garden coolies have come into collision with villagers occurred at Mathurapur on the 1st of August last. A Muhammadan took some carts of grain to

the Mathurapur *hát*. He was surrounded by a number of coolies, and some sort of dispute started, in the course of which it was alleged that the grain in his carts was looted, and he was taken off by the angry coolies to the manager's bungalow. The manager directed his immediate release. The Muhammadan accused the medical officer of the garden of having instigated these acts of violence. The Magistrate found the story of the looting of the grain to be false, but that of force having been used to be true, and sentenced one of the accused to rigorous imprisonment for six weeks, three to rigorous imprisonment for two weeks, and one, who was in bad health, to pay a fine of Rs. 5. The native doctor and the other two coolies accused were discharged. An application for revision was made, however, and a re-enquiry was ordered into the case of the former. He was eventually acquitted. Personally, I do not agree with the half-and-half view of the case taken by the Magistrate, and am of opinion that, as a matter of fact, the complainant was robbed of a quantity of grain, as well as assaulted and wrongfully confined by the coolies.

General condition of labourers.

91. Mr. Cotton's own inspections were limited to the higher class of gardens in the province, but in regard to these there can be no question of the general excellence of the coolie lines, water-supply, sanitation, and medical arrangements. He considers it fair to the tea industry to repeat in this connection the remarks recorded by Sir William Ward in paragraph 42 of last year's report—

> No one acquainted with the tea districts twenty years ago, when Sir William Ward first came to the province, could fail to be struck, when revisiting them now, with the vastly improved condition of the houses in which the coolies live, of the water-supply, and the general sanitary surroundings of the lines; twenty years ago, hospitals on gardens were practically unknown, and new coolies were seldom or never dieted, whereas at the present day, no well-managed garden is without a hospital, while the practice of dieting new coolies is common everywhere.

92. It is satisfactory to notice that the importance of securing an adequate labour force is becoming more and more recognised by the planting community. There is nothing more likely to lower the physique of the coolies than being forced to work when their health is indifferent, and if the labour force is a weak one, the temptation to put pressure on sick coolies to turn out and work is very strong, and the danger of this being done varies inversely with the number of coolies employed. On the other hand, it is well known that the healthiest and most popular gardens are those which have the largest proportionate number of coolies. The extent to which planters have increased their labour supply during the last fifteen years is shown in the following statement :

Year.	Area under tea cultivation.	Total adult labour force (annual mean), Act and non-Act.	Number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea.
	Acres.		
1882 ...	178,851	131,405	73
1883 ...	189,453	153,739	81
1884 ...	189,852	177,622	93
1885 ...	197,510	188,262	95
1886 ...	203,993	192,076	94
1887 ...	211,079	203,023	96
1888 ...	216,676	219,861	101
1889 ...	227,249	241,297	106
1890 ...	231,038	250,113	108
1891 ...	241,823	265,315	109
1892 ...	247,192	283,819	114
1893 ...	254,126	302,558	119
1894 ...	268,796	310,767	115
1895 ...	276,014	334,298	121
1896 ...	293,909	366,460	125

In 1882 only 73 adults were employed for every 100 acres of tea in cultivation. Cultivation has extended rapidly since then, but the adult force has been added to still more rapidly, and there are now 125 adults to every 100 acres of tea.

Settlement of time-expired labourers on the land.

93. On the expiry of their original agreements many of the coolies renew them or migrate to other gardens, but a large number take to other avocations and become petty traders, cartmen, or cultivators, and it is known that very large areas of waste land in the province have been brought under cultivation by them. It is impossible to give complete figures, as in many cases, especially in the Surma Valley, they settle as

tenants of private landholders. But so far as land taken up direct from Government is concerned, information has been collected for a number of years, and, although even this is not very accurate, it is sufficient to show that the settlement of time-expired coolies on the land is increasing rapidly. The following statement gives figures for the last two years, and also for 1880, 1885, and 1890:

District.	Area settled direct with time-expired coolies in—				
	1880.	1885.	1890.	1895.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6
		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cachar	1,467	423	7,133	11,122	11,356
Sylhet	(a)	83	300	386	229
Kamrup	56	14	42	130	155
Darrang	1,254	3,063	7,454	11,319	14,347
Nowgong	77	520	1,895	3,831	4,193
Sibsagar	990	1,856	10,639	14,240	16,275
Lakhimpur	740	2,237	4,897	12,590	11,612
Total	4,584	8,196	32,360	53,618	58,167

(a) Information not available.

The annual immigration of coolies to tea gardens is thus not only a gain to the tea industry which recruits them, but also aids in the general development of the province.

Time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.

94. The following statement gives details of time-expired garden coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in the several districts of the province:

District.	Number of time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.	Nature of disease.							Number of days treated.	Average period of detention, in days.
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Other causes.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	277	...	25	41	37	59	115	277	9,624	34·7
Sylhet	233	7	73	54	32	3	64	233	2,396	10·2
Kamrup	*Nil.*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	48	...	2	5	15	7	19	48	1,709	35·6
Nowgong	23	...	3	...	7	4	9	23	713	31·0
Sibsagar	130	2	9	18	16	15	70	130	1,488	11·4
Lakhimpur	35	...	1	5	1	...	28	35	683	19·5
Total of 1896	746	9	113	123	108	88	305	746	16,613	22·2
„ „ *1895*	*888*	*3*	*95*	*124*	*111*	*154*	*401*	*888*	*17,610*	*19·8*

The decrease in the number of persons treated at dispensaries may be ascribed to the generally healthy character of the year.

95. The statement below shows the receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1896-97.

Receipts.				Expenditure.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Medical	...	...	...	Salaries of depôts, establishments (including Native doctors, hospital assistants, compounders, dressers, clerks, and menials, etc.) ...	9,918 10 3	1,240 2 6	11,158 12 8
Contractors' license fees under section 23	3,140 8 0	300 0 0	3,440 8 0	Supplies and services (including diet of patients, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, expenses during the prevalence of epidemics, petty construction and repairs) ...	12,165 12 4	841 7 8	13,007 4 0
Recruiters' license fees under section 24	...	236 0 0	236 0 0				
Registration fees under sections 35 and 68 ...	...	22,172 0 0	22,172 0 0				
Fees for license of inland steamers and native boats under section 90 ...	65 0 0	1,448 0 0	1,514 0 0		+ 394 15 9	...	+ 394 15 9
Rates under section 109 ...	62,222 10 0	...	62,222 10 0	Contingent charges	1,298 13 3	226 15 3	1,525 12 8
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	4,139 12 3	...	4,139 12 3	Grants to dispensaries	4,540 0 0	...	4,540 0 0
Fees for labour contracts under sections 112 and 112B.	13,518 0 0	...	13,518 0 0	Inspectors, embarkation agents, and other officers	7,282 14 8	13,202 13 9	20,485 14 5
Medical examination fees ...	116 0 0	...	116 0 0	Clerks and servants	9,637 11 10	3,283 13 5	14,921 11 3
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	1,736 7 0	...	1,736 7 0	Travelling allowance	8,643 1 6	2,111 9 9	9,754 10 9
Fines and miscellaneous ...	1,194 11 0	...	1,194 11 0	Miscellaneous (including rents, percentage of treasury and audit establishment, refunds, pensions).	3,006 2 3	5,761 15 4	9,760 1 7
Diet, etc., charges recovered...	3,723 8 6	...	3,723 8 6	Repatriation charges	2,458 0 10	...	2,458 0 10
				Fees for inspecting tea gardens ...	4,455 1 4	...	4,455 1 4
				Deficiency (excess of payments over receipts in the Bengal portion of the Fund).	+3,434 1 8	—3,434 1 8	...
Grand total	89,857 8 9	24,176 0 0	1,14,033 8 9	Grand total...	85,125 5 3	24,176 0 0	99,402 5 3

The statement shows an excess of receipts over expenditure during the year of Rs. 21,631-3-6, and the fund is in a solvent condition. It is anticipated that there will be a large increase in expenditure when effect is given to the recommendations made by Surgeon-Major Campbell for the improvement of transit arrangements.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

E. A. GAIT,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

The 6th October 1897.

Return showing the Statistics of the Labour Force of the

Classes of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of the year.	Additions made during				
		Imported.				
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contracts under section 141.	Number giving contracts under section 142.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	6,845 / 63,634 / 41,793	919 / ... / ...	453 / ... / ...	... / 8,495 / 1,382	227 / ... / ...	628 / ... / ...
Total	112,272	919	453	10,376	227	628
Sylhet .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	11,411 / 62,876 / 48,406	1,687 / .. / ..	530 / .. / ..	.. / 16,534 / 8,442	4,309 / .. / ..	1,425 / .. / ..
Total	122,693	1,687	530	24,976	4,309	1,425
Surma Valley .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	18,256 / 116,410 / 90,197	2,596 / .. / ..	983 / .. / ..	.. / 25,018 / 10,224	4,536 / .. / ..	2,063 / .. / ..
Total	234,963	2,596	983	53,242	4,536	2,063
Kamrup .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	561 / 1,008 / 1,093	80 / .. / ..	96 / .. / ..	.. / 61 / 100	2 / .. / ..	6 / .. / ..
Total	2,662	80	96	161	2	6
Darrang .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	24,848 / 15,025 / 10,730	2,549 / .. / ..	2,028 / .. / ..	.. / 1,100 / 2,706	3,060 / .. / ..	2,061 / .. / ..
Total	50,603	2,549	2,028	3,706	3,060	2,061
Nowgong .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	5,220 / 6,537 / 5,746	1,831 / .. / ..	465 / .. / ..	.. / 217 / 738	867 / .. / ..	93 / .. / ..
Total	17,603	1,831	465	955	867	93
Sibsagar .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	38,322 / 30,074 / 40,680	5,033 / .. / ..	2,273 / .. / ..	.. / 2,915 / 2,376	2,912 / .. / ..	3,471 / .. / ..
Total	120,376	5,033	2,273	5,291	2,912	3,471
Lakhimpur .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	38,681 / 30,137 / 32,515	5,871 / .. / ..	2,715 / .. / ..	.. / 3,660 / 2,770	2,805 / .. / ..	4,339 / .. / ..
Total	101,343	5,871	2,715	6,430	2,805	4,339
Brahmaputra Valley .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	107,542 / 89,381 / 105,224	16,324 / .. / ..	9,477 / .. / ..	.. / 6,052 / 9,090	10,246 / .. / ..	12,070 / .. / ..
Total	302,147	16,324	9,477	15,142	10,246	12,070
Total for the Province .. .. { Act-I labourers (adults) .. .. / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ..	125,798 / 217,001 / 195,423	18,870 / .. / ..	10,460 / .. / ..	.. / 31,071 / 19,814	14,782 / .. / ..	14,133 / .. / ..
Grand total	537,512	18,870	10,460	51,785	14,782	14,133

Tea Gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1895.

the year 1896.								Deductions made during the year 1896.			
Otherwise than by importation.										Deaths.	
Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.	Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	First half-year.	Second half-year.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
89 1,585 10	101 ..	.. 1,475	.. 2,523 7.0	 2,568	 1,044	2,417 15,617 5,150	9,161 91,105 46,143	850 1,103 52	.. 510 70	204 945 804	145 968 736
1,384	101	1,475	4,113	2,568	1,044	23,188	135,160	2,035	580	1,653	1,867
313 1,764 667	51	.. 4,515 ..	.. 4,221 1,263	 3,206	.. 1,227 ..	9,225 83,311 13,678	79,616 91,187 68,204	327 701 260	.. 4,640 1,812	249 1,201 571	272 1,338 645
2,744	51	4,515	5,474	3,206	1,227	56,214	172,307	1,288	6,452	2,685	2,755
492 3,039 687	152	.. 5,930 ..	.. 7,544 2,043	 5,874	.. 2,341 ..	10,613 43,233 18,828	96,818 170,447 109,087	1,207 1,804 312	.. 5,169 1,801	453 2,150 1,075	417 2,324 1,384
4,738	152	5,930	9,587	5,874	2,341	73,402	308,367	3,323	7,030	3,678	4,128
23 45 5	.. .. ..	98 ..	.. 730 141	 101	.. 38 ..	307 972 247	756 2,601 1,140	24 10 15	.. 500 133	26 40 18	32 36 11
73	..	98	871	101	38	1,526	5,018	49	633	84	69
311 351 122	79	.. 6,444	.. 5,605 378	 1,151	.. 372 ..	12,188 13,122 4,155	37,136 50,147 23,041	311 351 193	.. 7,239 1,107	633 170 141	573 162 115
783	79	6,444	6,031	1,152	372	31,065	90,328	783	8,537	944	850
321 62 32	36	.. 632	.. 2,518 124	 336	.. 230 ..	3,133 3,953 1,230	8,133 10,196 7,076	324 41 35	.. 3,472 362	189 162 145	191 135 197
415	36	632	2,642	336	230	8,202	25,805	400	3,834	496	433
415 391 136	138	.. 6,954 ..	.. 5,650 460	 2,005	.. 1,134 ..	17,342 16,264 7,095	55,664 51,238 53,085	415 317 106	.. 6,182 1,048	888 573 541	811 811 545
962	138	6,954	6,330	2,993	1,134	40,601	160,887	978	7,230	2,002	1,769
326 383 110	88	.. 7,729 ..	.. 3,472 440	 2,641	.. 890 ..	16,744 16,834 5,662	54,735 46,311 38,477	284 975 98	.. 8,912 1,701	936 562 466	859 538 487
819	88	7,729	4,012	2,641	890	39,240	139,583	657 11	7,613	1,944	1,884
1,316 1,133 424	341	21,857	13,325 1,561	 7,124	 2,683	40,334 51,631 18,709	157,416 160,831 124,033	1,338 1,074 435	.... 89,196 4,334	2,472 1,867 1,291 69	2,457 1,881 1,265
3,052	341	21,857	19,886	7,124	2,683	119,744	422,052	2,857	26,746	5,669	5,603
1,768 4,271 1,111	493	.. 27,647 ..	.. 35,983 3,804	 13,098	.. 5,025 ..	60,136 92,183 33,687	186,334 311,074 133,950	2,163 2,878 747	.... 87,554 6,642	3,124 3,667 2,368	2,874 3,693 2,040
7,150	493	27,647	39,473	13,098	5,025	193,146	630,458	5,190	33,796	9,147	9,225

Return showing the Statistics of the Labour Force of the

Classes of labourers.		Deductions made during						
		Desertions.		By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under section 11A.	Number giving agreements under section 11B.	Cancellment under section 11A.	Cancellment under sections 11A, 11B, 13, 14, 14A, or 17.
		First half-year.	Second half-year.					
		19		20	21	22	23	24
Cachar	Act-I labourers (adults)	420	308	..	..	..	7	..
	Non-Act labourers { adults	508	1,026	..	107	686	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	45	118	1,044	..	..	..	..
	Total	973	2,352	1,044	107	686	7	..
Sylhet	Act-I labourers (adults)	553	719	..	..	..	4	..
	Non-Act labourers { adults	3,139	3,071	..	3,319	574	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	1,156	1,315	1,297	..	..	..	..
	Total	4,848	5,105	1,297	3,319	574	4	..
Surma Valley	Act-I labourers (adults)	973	1,027	..	..	..	11	..
	Non-Act labourers { adults	3,647	4,407	..	3,426	1,260	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	1,201	1,433	2,341	..	..	..	..
	Total	5,821	7,457	2,341	3,426	1,260	11	..
Kamrup	Act-I labourers (adults)	12	11	..	..	..	..	..
	Non Act labourers { adults	104	133	..	..	..	..	..
	Non Act labourers { children	22	78	38	..	..	..	..
	Total	138	228	38	..	..	..	..
Darrang	Act-I labourers (adults)	534	416	..	..	..	15	192*
	Non-Act labourers { adults	363	268	..	2,701	1,524	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	52	109	372	..	..	..	..
	Total	949	793	372	2,701	1,524	15	192
Nowgong	Act-I labourers (adults)	183	102	..	..	..	..	1
	Non-Act labourers { adults	109	231	..	356	56	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	63	67	230	..	..	..	..
	Total	355	300	230	356	56	..	1
Sibsagar	Act-I labourers (adults)	637	507	..	..	..	14	6
	Non-Act labourers { adults	540	601	..	2,134	2,245	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	414	752	1,154	..	..	..	..
	Total	1,591	1,343	1,154	2,134	2,245	14	6
Lakhimpur	Act-I labourers (adults)	490	604	..	..	..	15	117
	Non-Act labourers { adults	422	597	..	2,455	2,180	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	178	160	850	..	..	..	..
	Total	1,090	1,361	850	2,455	2,180	15	117
Brahmaputra Valley	Act-I labourers (adults)	1,856	2,820	..	..	..	44	316
	Non-Act labourers { adults	1,538	1,737	..	7,616	8,005	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	739	576	2,684	..	..	..	..
	Total	4,133	4,133	2,684	7,616	8,005	44	316
Total for the Province	Act-I labourers (adults)	2,829	2,847	..	..	..	59	316
	Non-Act labourers { adults	5,185	6,734	..	11,072	9,265	..	..
	Non-Act labourers { children	1,930	2,009	5,025	..	..	..	..
	Grand total	9,944	11,590	5,025	11,072	9,265	55	316

* Under sec

Tea Gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1895—continued.

the year 1896—*contd.*									Annual strength.		
Cautioned for permanent unlicensed under section 121.	Cancelled under section 139.	Suspended under section 180.	Efflux of time, section 141.	Redemption, section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1895.	Strength on 1st July 1896.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Deaths per mille.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		35
11	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	1,348	.. .. ..	23	2,563 6,710 1,870	5,910 77,475 44,361	6,831 67,111 45,781	6,436 67,062 44,747	6,471 67,111 44,771	53·3 40·4 30·5
22	..	..	1,348	..	23	13,710	127,750	127,603	125,117	126,156	29·8
377	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	4,880	.. .. ..	59	7,446 17,187 7,106	12,706 174,600 55,040	12,102 169,128 52,313	11,757 167,227 50,318	12,149 170,181 51,093	63·5 36·5 23·3
377	..	..	4,880	..	59	32,183	240,434	233,453	229,072	233,423	33·0
388	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	6,328	.. .. ..	88	10,702 24,787 9,624	15,106 245,671 90,350	18,194 237,709 93,218	18,103 231,699 93,018	18,430 242,182 97,692	47·0 34·5 26·6
388	..	..	6,328	..	88	45,103	363,124	353,415	344,182	358,293	30·9
.. .. ..	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	117	.. .. ..	3	314 839 195	564 2,611 1,175	546 2,311 1,107	553 2,361 1,130	550 2,138 1,146	8·0 36·3 25·4
..	..	..	117	..	3	1,358	3,730	3,995	3,743	3,837	40·4
87	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	7,272	.. .. ..	124	10,237 12,869 2,117	22,479 17,078 20,918	26,544 15,102 20,407	25,696 17,164 19,528	27,011 17,050 20,668	45·8 18·7 12·8
87	..	..	7,272	..	124	25,743	65,485	65,823	62,758	65,669	27·9
139	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	936	.. .. ..	3	2,107 3,561 899	6,426 6,631 6,177	5,818 8,755 6,075	5,519 7,446 5,960	6,122 7,404 6,138	65·1 39·7 41·7
139	..	..	936	..	3	6,568	19,237	20,648	18,925	19,743	48·0
240	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	9,567	.. .. ..	614	12,730 14,015 4,020	41,874 37,163 49,965	30,031 40,153 40,415	36,676 37,778 47,697	40,452 38,903 49,140	43·9 35·6 22·3
240	..	..	9,567	..	614	31,885	129,002	128,039	124,152	128,515	29·8
285	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	9,401	4	419	13,604 12,848 3,980	41,231 32,523 34,477	40,771 33,136 34,092	39,681 31,286 33,303	41,001 32,469 34,304	44·4 33·9 23·5
285	..	..	9,401	4	419	31,332	108,231	108,038	104,750	108,354	35·8
771	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	27,413	4	1,162	39,872 45,183 21,231	117,164 90,449 117,638	114,210 103,417 109,156	110,126 96,514 107,960	115,132 99,448 111,424	45·5 32·2 23·2
771	..	..	27,413	4	1,162	96,286	325,705	326,783	314,330	326,009	33·6
1,159	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	33,641	4	1,250	50,561 69,360 20,905	135,670 241,124 312,085	131,444 248,136 206,148	128,621 239,113 200,785	133,557 247,630 204,116	45·7 30·8 24·3
1,159	..	..	33,641	4	1,250	141,579	688,879	579,728	568,520	584,303	32·0

tion 132,

ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE (REV.) No. 271—300—9-10-97.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1897.

132912

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
1898.

Price One Rupee.

SHILLONG :

PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ASSAM
SECRETARIAT PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

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STATEMENT.

RETURN SHOWING THE STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE OF THE TEA GARDENS IN THE PROVINCE OF ASSAM DURING THE YEAR 1897 55

Published under the direction of Colonel H. H. Godwin, R.E., Surveyor General of India.
Engraved at the Survey of India Office, Calcutta.
1881.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR 1897.

CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION.

AS stated in previous years, this report deals only with labourers imported for employment on tea gardens, on coal-mines in Upper Assam, and in a few saw-mills. No statistics are available for coolies who visit the province annually for employment on Public Works or on the Assam-Bengal Railway. These persons come to Assam at the beginning of the cold weather, and usually return to their homes in April and May.

Provincial figures of immigration.

2. The following table shows the immigration of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past two years and in 1890:

Class of labourers.	1890.	1896.	1897.	Increase or decrease compared with 1896.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act ... Sardari adults ...	7,291	10,460	22,490	+12,030	+115·0
Act ... Contractors' „ ...	10,082	18,870	18,127	— 743	— 3·9
Non-Act adults	8,832	31,971	25,711	— 6,260	— 19·5
Total of Act and Non-Act adults ...	26,205	61,301	65,328	+ 5,027	+ 8·2
Children	9,875	19,814	29,603	+ 9,789	+ 49·4
Grand total	36,080	81,115	95,931	+14,816	+ 18·2

In this table and in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter, except paragraph 8, the expression "Act adults" includes those immigrants who proceed to Dhubri without any contract, and enter into contract there under section 112 of Act I of 1882.

The two noticeable features of the above statement are the large increase in the total number of immigrants to the province, which is rendered the more remarkable from the fact that each of the past three years—1895, 1896 and 1897—has shown a larger total than any of its predecessors, and the fact that this increase is entirely accounted for under the two heads of "Sardari adults" and "Children." Both these results are due to the scarcity prevailing in the recruiting districts. Though the area under tea is continually increasing and the advantage of providing a garden with a strong labour force is more generally recognised than was formerly the case, there is no reason to suppose that the demand for labour during the past year has been in any way exceptional, and the larger importation of coolies is primarily attributable to the cheapness of the supply. The conditions were favourable to the emigration of whole families, and also to the operations of garden sardars, as sardari coolies are usually preferred

by employers when obtainable, and it is chiefly in seasons of prosperity when labour is difficult to procure in the recruiting districts, that they are compelled to fall back on contractors.

3. The following table gives statistics for each division and tea district of the province for the last two years :

District and Valley statistics of immigration.

District.	Act adults.			Non-Act adults.			Total of Act and non-Act adults.			Children.			Grand total, including children.		
	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar ...	1,372	1,546	+12·68	8,402	6,077	− 27·67	9,866	8,623	−12·67	1,782	3,040	+ 70·59	11,648	11,551	− ·78
Sylhet ..	2,117	2,487	+17·47	16,524	9,567	− 42·06	18,641	11,994	−35·65	8,441	5,428	− 35·70	27,082	17,422	− 35·67
Total Surma Valley	3,489	4,033	+15·59	25,026	16,478	− 34·14	28,507	20,561	−28·05	10,224	8,468	− 17·17	38,732	28,979	− 25·2
Kamrup ..	176	207	+17·61	61	70	+ 14·75	237	277	+16·87	206	143	+ 45·06	237	420	+ 24·82
Darrang ...	6,477	7,017	+ 8·49	1,100	1,093	− ·63	7,577	8,130	+ 7·19	2,606	4,344	+ 66·69	10,183	13,464	+ 32·40
Nowgong ...	2,196	3,045	+38·63	217	820	+ 280·64	2,513	3,871	+54·00	738	1,449	+ 96·34	3,251	5,320	+ 63·64
Sibsagar ..	8,300	11,351	+36·66	1,915	3,476	+ 81·51	10,321	14,827	+43·66	3,276	6,698	+104·32	13,597	21,525	+ 58·37
Lakhimpur ...	8,688	14,054	+74·16	3,060	3,878	+ 2·95	12,340	18,722	+51·68	2,770	8,301	+199·67	15,016	27,023	+ 79·96
Total Assam Valley	25,841	36,584	+41·57	6,353	9,237	+ 32·79	32,794	45,827	+39·72	9,596	21,135	+120·38	42,384	66,932	+ 57·6
Grand total .	29,330	40,617	+38·48	31,971	25,711	− 19·59	61,301	66,388	+ 8·30	19,814	29,603	+ 49·46	81,115	95,021	+ 17·15

In contrast to the results of the preceding year, there was a considerable increase in the number of persons imported under the Act, and a decrease in the number of non-Act adults imported. This is due to a decrease in the total volume of immigration to the Surma Valley, which takes place for the most part independently of the Act. In his report for 1896, the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, stated that in the case of some of the more popular gardens in that district, the supply of labour exceeded the demand, and this year he remarks :

The year, moreover, has not been the best possible for the industry, and agents are chary of launching out into fresh expenditure. Possibly, too, the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway line to Badarpur has rendered available a large number of coolies for employment on gardens.

All districts in the Assam Valley show an increase in the recruitment of both Act and non-Act adults and children, with the exception of Darrang, where there was a slight falling-off in the importations of non-Act adults. The increase was most conspicuous in the case of the Sibsagar and Lakhimpur districts.

The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, writes as follows :

It is significant that of all the persons interested whom I have been able to consult, not one has suggested that the increase in the number of immigrants was due to any abnormal increase in the demand for labour. The area under tea cultivation is undoubtedly extending rapidly, and the standard of cultivation demanded by modern requirements becomes higher year by year; and it cannot be denied that both factors tend to create a demand not only for a higher aggregate labour force, but also for a greater number of labourers per acre of cultivation. The increase which has taken place, however, is out of all proportion to any increase in the demand that can be attributed to these two considerations ; and, as a matter of fact, employers would be prepared to receive double the number of immigrants they received last year if they could be obtained at a reasonable outlay. The conclusion from this is that the increase which has taken place is attributable solely to the supply of immigrants available having been greater than usual owing to the famine ; but that, great as it was, the supply failed to fully satisfy the demand for labour.

4. The nationality and sex of adult immigrants and the agency by which Act immigrants were imported are shown in the following statement :

Nationality of immigrants.

Nationality of immigrants.		Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
		1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Southal Parganas. Men	2,264	6,088	3,383	5,047	3,664	3,074	9,311	15,209
	Chota Nagpur and Southal Parganas. Women	1,888	5,285	2,935	4,033	1,958	3,671	6,811	13,049
	Total	4,151	11,353	6,318	9,140	5,652	7,585	16,122	28,078
	Behar Men	406	601	507	196	1,062	367	1,975	1,164
	Behar Women	285	431	311	213	852	319	1,449	963
	Total	691	1,035	818	409	1,914	686	3,424	2,130
	Bengal Proper and Orissa Men	357	559	1,115	944	814	790	2,276	2,302
	Bengal Proper and Orissa Women	309	506	1,039	1,067	654	843	2,302	2,416
	Total	666	1,065	2,154	2,011	1,468	1,642	4,678	4,718
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Men	733	967	1,993	391	7,888	3,617	9,716	4,776
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Women	484	551	834	432	8,101	3,629	9,419	4,915
	Total	1,217	1,327	1,723	824	15,989	7,246	19,135	9,391
Central Provinces	Men	2,053	4,124	3,769	2,693	3,584	3,661	9,416	10,378
Central Provinces	Women	1,409	3,110	3,631	2,795	2,829	3,593	7,869	9,498
	Total	3,472	7,134	7,400	5,488	6,413	7,254	17,285	19,876
Madras	Men	127	344	94	141	216	640	337	1,125
Madras	Women	82	229	71	101	78	608	231	938
	Total	209	573	165	242	294	1,248	568	2,113
Bombay	Men	17	2	4	8	14	...	35	10
Bombay	Women	6	2	...	...	10	...	16	2
	Total	23	4	4	8	24	...	51	12
Nepal	Men	18	3	...	5	12	...	30	8
Nepal	Women	1	2	1	...	5	...	7	2
	Total	19	5	1	5	17	...	37	10
Assam	Men	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...
Assam	Women	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...
Total	Men	5,995	12,978	10,048	9,426	17,754	13,048	33,797	34,842
Total	Women	4,465	10,122	8,811	8,701	14,817	12,663	28,104	31,486
	Grand total	10,460	23,490	18,870	18,127	31,971	25,711	61,901	66,328

This statement discloses a large increase (from 16,122 to 28,078) in the number of importations from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas, the district which provides the most suitable class of coolies for Assam, and a large decrease (from 19,135 to 9,391) in the number of labourers who came from the North-Western Provinces. A decrease in the importation of labourers of the latter class had been anticipated. In the report for 1896, the Chief Commissioner recorded the following observations:

The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet reports that planters in his district are beginning to recognise that these coolies do not thrive in some localities, and it may be expected that this fact and the action which has been taken by this Administration during the last two years in the direction of closing to Act coolies of this nationality gardens which are unsuited to their constitution, will cause a reduction in future years in the number recruited for such gardens.

In Sylhet alone there was a decrease of nearly 8,000 immigrants of this class, while in Darrang the figures fell from 1,089 in 1896 to 395 in 1897. The increase in immigration from the Central Provinces (from 17,285 to 19,875) is entirely the result of sardari and non-Act importations. There was a considerable increase in the number of coolies imported from Madras, principally to Sylhet. In 1892, the number of coolies emigrating from that province was 2,894, but in the years 1893—1896, there was a large decrease, which was apparently due to favourable seasons, and the construction of large public works in Madras, which gave ample employment to local labour. During the past year, however, the immigration from Madras returned to the level which prevailed from 1890—1892.

Female immigrants.

5. The proportion borne by women to the total number of adult immigrants from the different areas of recruitment, is shown in the statement below:

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to total adult immigrants among							
	Sardari immigrants.		Contractors' immigrants.		Non-Act immigrants.		All adult immigrants.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ...	45·4	46·5	46·4	44·7	35·1	48·4	42·2	46·5
Behar	41·3	41·9	38·0	52·1	44·5	46·5	43·3	45·3
Bengal Proper and Orissa	45·7	47·5	46·5	53·0	53·9	51·3	49·2	51·2
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	39·7	41·9	43·2	52·4	50·6	50·1	49·2	49·1
Central Provinces	40·5	43·6	49·0	50·9	44·1	49·5	45·5	47·8

There was an increase in the proportion of women imported from every part of India, except the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, where the percentage was practically the same as in the previous year. The increase was most conspicuous in the case of coolies sent up by contractors who, as already remarked, were enabled by the prevailing scarcity to induce whole families to emigrate. The proportion of women amongst the whole number of adult immigrants coming to the province was 47·8 per cent., against 45·5 per cent. in the preceding year, and the Chief Commissioner views with satisfaction this indication that families are bodily migrating from the congested portions of India to start life afresh in a country where there is ample room for them to settle.

6. The following table shows the number of Act labourers imported into each district and division during the past year by contractors and sardars, respectively, and the average number imported by each sardar :

Extent to which Act labourers were recruited by contractors and garden sardars.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.		Number of sardari coolies imported.		Average number of recruits per sardar.		Number of contractors' coolies imported.		Percentage of increase or decrease of importations of Act labourers during 1897, as compared with 1896.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	Sardari.	Contractors'.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	321	168	453	722	1·4	4·2	919	824	+ 59·3	— 10·3
Sylhet	493	470*	530	1,320	1·0	2·8	1,587	1,167	+ 149·0	— 26·4
Total Surma Valley	814	638	983	2,042	1·2	3·2	2,506	1,991	+ 107·7	— 25·8
Kamrup	6	12	96	131	16·0	10·9	80	86	+ 26·9	+ 7·5
Darrang	938	690	2,958	4,826	3·1	6·9	3,549	2,201	+ 64·8	— 37·9
Nowgong	265	228	463	1,682	1·7	7·3	1,831	1,365	+ 261·2	— 25·4
Sibsagar	1,727	1,754	3,273	7,120	1·8	4·0	5,033	4,231	+ 117·5	— 15·9
Lakhimpur	1,484	1,103	2,715	6,701	1·8	6·0	5,871	5,253	+ 146·8	+ 40·5
Total Brahmaputra Valley ...	4,420	3,787	9,477	20,448	2·1	5·4	16,364	16,136	+ 115·7	— 1·4
Grand total	5,234	4,425	10,460	22,490	2·0	5·1	18,870	18,127	+ 115·0	— 3·9

* Exclusive of 14 certificates cancelled afterwards at the request of the employers.

The year was conspicuous for the success of sardari recruiting. For the Surma Valley, which is easily accessible from the recruiting districts, little difficulty has been experienced for some years past in obtaining an abundant supply of labour through garden sardars, who, however, for the most part work outside the provisions of the Act, so that their success or failure cannot be gauged from the figures in the above statement. The Assam Valley, however, is so remote, and its jungles and fevers are so dreaded, that it has been hitherto necessary to obtain the greater portion of the labour supply through professional agency, and the number of sardari coolies imported declined steadily from 1893 till 1895. In 1895, garden sardars brought up 6,941, and contractors sent up 16,642 persons; in 1896, the figures were 9,477 and 16,364; in 1897, sardars brought up no less than 20,448 souls and contractors only 16,136. Thus, while the number of coolies obtained through contractors has been steadily decreasing during the past three years, the number recruited by garden sardars has increased by leaps and bounds. These results are no doubt due to the famine and the consequent facility with which people have been induced to emigrate; but it may be hoped that the advantage which the sardari method of recruitment has gained under these favourable conditions will not be lost, and that with the encouragement afforded by the Central Recruiting Agency the system will soon be established on a firm basis.

7. The following figures show the number of sardars' certificates issued in the several districts which provided, under section 70 of the Act, for the medical examination of labourers prior to engagement, and the proportion of such certificates to the total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardars during the past two years :

Medical examination of sardari immigrants.

District.	Number of certificates which provided for the medical examination of labourers.		Percentage of such certificates to total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardars.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
Cachar	150	146	46·7	86·9
Sylhet	194	293	39·3	62·3
Kamrup	...	8	...	66·6
Darrang	667	343	72·1	49·7
Nowgong	245	215	92·4	94·3
Sibsagar	1,412	1,327	81·7	75·6
Lakhimpur	827	645	55·7	58·4
Total	3,495	2,977	66·7	67·3

The figures are disappointing. There has been a considerable increase in the number of such certificates issued in Sylhet, but the Chief Commissioner notices that none of the certificates issued in the Karimganj subdivision, and only 13·72 per cent. of those issued in Habiganj provided for medical inspection. He can only repeat what was said in the report for 1895, that while the importation of bad batches of coolies cannot, under any circumstances, be admitted as a sufficient excuse for excessive mortality, he will have the less hesitation in enforcing the responsibility of employers when they omit to take this very necessary precaution.

Statistics of free or assisted emigration.

8. The statement below shows separately the following classes of adult immigrants: (1) those recruited through contractors under Chapter III of the Act; (2) those recruited through garden sardars under Chapter IV of the Act; (3) those who entered into contracts under the Act at Dhubri; (4) those who entered into contract under the Act in the actual labour districts; and (5) those who, after arrival in the labour districts, were employed as free labourers, *i.e.*, who were not placed on contract under the Act:

District.	Act immigrants.			Free (non-Act) immigrants subsequently employed as Act labourers.			Free (non-Act) immigrants employed as free (non-Act) labourers and dependents.			Grand total.
	Contracted in recruiting districts		Total.	Contracted at Dhubri.	Contracted in actual labour district.	Total.	Adults.	Children.	Total.	
	Under Chapter III of Act.	Under Chapter IV of Act.								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ...	824	722	1,546	...	147	147	6,824	3,040	9,864	11,557
Sylhet ...	2,167	1,320	2,487	...	1,809	1,809	7,698	5,428	13,126	17,422
Total Surma Valley	1,991	2,042	4,033	...	1,956	1,956	14,522	8,468	22,990	28,979
Kamrup ...	51	38	89	118	22	140	48	143	191	420
Darrang ...	1,706	1,832	3,538	3,469	...	3,469	1,093	4,344	5,437	12,464
Nowgong ...	1,143	375	1,520	1,525	...	1,525	826	1,449	2,275	5,320
Sibsagar ...	2,462	4,799	6,761	4,590	189	4,779	3,287	6,898	10,185	21,725
Lakhimpur ...	5,640	4,024	9,664	5,290	83	5,373	3,685	8,301	11,986	27,023
Total Assam Valley	11,004	10,588	21,592	14,992	294	15,286	8,939	21,135	30,074	66,952
Grand total ...	12,995	12,630	25,625	14,992	2,250	17,242	23,461	29,603	53,064	95,931
Total of 1896 ...	11,105	5,246	16,351	12,979	7,077	20,056	24,894	19,814	44,708	81,115

The errors in the figures furnished for this statement from the districts of Cachar and Sylhet, which were referred to in last year's report, have now been eliminated, and the statistics given in the statement agree with those furnished in other portions of the report. Of the total number of immigrants who executed agreements before arriving at the actual labour district, 36·9 per cent. were placed under contract at Dhubri, as compared with 44·2 per cent. in the preceding year.

Cost of importation.

9. There was a general decrease in the cost of importing labour owing to the famine, and not apparently to any falling-off in the demand. It is reported that with the disappearance of famine, contractors have already begun to raise their rates, and in view of the rapid extensions of tea cultivation now in progress, especially in the Assam Valley, it may be expected that the cost of importing sardari coolies will also rise before long.

Medical rejections at Dhubri.

10. The Civil Surgeon at Dhubri rejected 1,318, or 8·1 per cent., of the 16,236 persons whom it was proposed to put under contract there, as compared with 426, or 3·2 per cent. in 1896. The question of the medical examination of immigrants at Dhubri was discussed at some length in paragraphs 12 to 16 of the report for the year 1896, and it was there stated that, though the orders issued by Sir William Ward prohibiting the Civil Surgeon at Dhubri from examining labourers as to their fitness to labour except when requested to do so by the employer, were in conformity with the principles laid down in the Act, Mr. Cotton was of opinion that this alteration in procedure had not been beneficial. The Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, in his report for 1897, writes as follows:

> The coolies are medically examined by the Civil Surgeon with a view to ascertain if they are fit to undertake the journey. A thorough medical examination to see whether the coolie is in a fit state of health and able, in point of physical condition, to reside in and labour for hire in the labour districts, is also made by the Civil Surgeon, but only in those cases when he is specially requested by the employer of labour to do so. The coolies medically rejected are left at the disposal of the depôt managers, who send them to the gardens either as free labourers or dependents. A few are also returned by them to their native places.....Care has been taken to prevent depôt managers from passing the rejected coolies as dependents unless a relationship makes it permissible.

It is not stated how many persons were rejected on account of unfitness to labour, and how many for unfitness to undertake the journey, nor has any explanation been furnished of the large proportion of rejections; but this is doubtless due to the enfeebled state in which many immigrants arrived from the famine-stricken districts. The medical examination at Dhubri is conducted under Rule 4 of the Rules framed under section 112B of the Act, and the Chief Commissioner is of opinion that the provisions of this rule are unsuitable to the circumstances in which they are applied. There can be no question as to the desirability of examining an intending emigrant in his native district as to his capacity to undertake the long and trying journey to Assam, but it is another matter when such an examination is held in the middle of the journey. If the coolie is unfit to travel, he must be detained at Dhubri till he dies or recovers; and in the latter case, if the provisions of the Act be strictly observed, there is no reason why he should not be put under contract and sent on to the garden for which he was originally destined, as if his health has sufficiently recovered to admit of his undertaking the rail and river journey to his home, it will equally allow him to undertake the journey to Upper Assam. Of the 1,318 persons rejected, 243 were repatriated, 762 were sent up as dependents, and 313 were sent up as free by depôt managers. In 1896, with 426 rejections, 119 persons were repatriated, 153 were sent on as dependents, and 154 as free labourers. These results are not satisfactory, and the only remedy for them is to insist by law that coolies shall be medically examined for their fitness to labour, as well to travel, at the time of registration in the district of recruitment.

Dhubri depôts.

11. There were, as in previous years, three depôts at Dhubri. The Deputy Commissioner reports that they were managed well, and kept in neat condition, the arrangements for food, water, conservancy, and hospital accommodation being in conformity with the rules.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley.

12. The use of feeder steamers for the conveyance of coolies to the Surma Valley continued during the year; since the close of the year, the Assam-Bengal Railway has been sanctioned as a route for coolie traffic. Arrangements have been made for the erection of shelter-houses at railway stations where coolies will alight for distant gardens, and for the supply of cooked meals at suitable intervals on the railway journey. Draft rules for the regulation of the feeder steamers are also under consideration. These steamers are so small, that they cannot provide sufficient accommodation for immigrants at night, and it is accordingly proposed that the days' run shall be fixed, and rest-houses, where cooked meals will be obtainable, provided at the places where the steamer stops for the night.

13. The following statement shows the extent to which debarkation depôts were used during the year:

Debarkation depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants to district.	Number that passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.	
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishment, etc.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
									Rs. a. p.	*Rs. a. p.*
Cachar ...	2	11,357	2,808	38	111	500	1,879	33	...	5,612 0 0
Sylhet ...	6	17,422	7,338	7	90	146	706	...	651 14 0	2,153 2 8
Kamrup ...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	1	12,464	10,722	309	365	383	4,125	...	610 1 9	2,221 0 9
Nowgong ...	1	5,120	5,463*	431	59	333	4,620	...	161 9 9	499 5 11
Sibsagar ...	3	21,725	25,011†	3,167	339	1,146	9,449	...	1,632 6 6	3,110 8 10
Lakhimpur ...	1	27,023	8,552	1,487	323	200	6,342	...	440 8 0	1,857 2 10
Total for 1897 ...	14	95,511	59,894	5,439	1,287	2,728	27,291	33	3,496 8 0	15,453 5 0
„ 1896 ...	13	80,778	36,060	2,987	1,015	1,126	11,433	4	2,346 1 9	13,128 4 1
„ 1895 ...	13	72,597	37,740	1,972	910	784	9,732	17	4,302 1 6	11,617 5 7

* Includes immigrants for Golaghat subdivision and sardars in charge of immigrants.
† Ditto 3,286 immigrants for Lakhimpur district.

One new depôt was opened during the year at Madna on the river Dhullessur for the use of coolies proceeding to Habiganj and portions of South Sylhet. There was a considerable increase in the number of coolies using the depôts, which was most marked in the case of Sibsagar, Sylhet, and Lakhimpur. In Sibsagar it is the custom for all immigrants, Act and non-Act alike, to pass through the depôts. The increase in Lakhimpur was caused by the abandonment in the latter part of the year of the erroneous procedure which formerly prevailed of allowing garden sardars and local agents to take delivery of Act coolies and their dependents direct from the steamer without passing them through the depôt as required by law. As usual, the largest number of detentions occurred in the Sibsagar district owing to the practice of landing coolies for North Lakhimpur at the Kokilamukh depôt. These detentions will no doubt largely decrease during the ensuing cold weather, when a depôt for North Lakhimpur coolies will be opened at Kamalabari.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

14. The following figures show the number of deaths among all classes of immigrants during transit between the port of embarkation and their destination in the Assam Valley:

	Number of deaths		
	From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
On board the steamer—between Goalundo and Dhubri ...	76	8	84
On board the steamer—between Dhubri (*a*) Goalundo coolies and Dibrugarh, (*b*) Jatrapur „	141	17	158
	154	25	179
At Dhubri	216	14	230
At ports of debarkation—			
Gauhati	...	...	...
Tezpur	233	6	239
Silghat	17	3	20
Nigriting	29	1	30
Kokilamukh	70	15	85
Disangmukh	53	8	61
Dibrugarh	132	27	159
Total	1,121	124	1,245
Total for 1896	693	75	768

Reference was made in paragraph 21 of last year's report to the lamentable outbreak of cholera along this route at the beginning of the year 1897, which the figures now available show to have been more severe than any that has occurred since the daily steamer service on the Brahmaputra was started. It was due in the first instance to the exceptionally large number of coolies imported from the famine districts, who were in many cases in a weak state of health and predisposed to disease; but the result of the special enquiries carried out during the cold weather of 1896-97 by Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell deputed by this Administration, as well as by Surgeon-Captain Vaughan under the orders of the Government of Bengal, showed conclusively that the origin of the disease was to be found in the insanitary depôt arrangements at the great recruiting centres in Bengal and the Central Provinces, in overcrowding and the absence of proper provision for the comfort of immigrants on the railway journey to the ports of embarkation—Goalundo and Jatrapur—and in the insufficient arrangements for the detention and segregation of infected batches at those places, or at intermediate points on the different railway routes. Placed on crowded steamers without any attempt at disinfection or segregation of those who had been in close contact with cholera patients in the train, it is no matter for surprise that an epidemic of exceptional severity broke out among immigrants on the river steamers and in the debarkation depôts. Mr. Cotton is aware of distressing cases in which coolies have been put on board actually suffering from cholera and of cases which have broken out on board immediately after the starting of the steamer.

15. The Chief Commissioner has since been consulted by the Government of Bengal with regard to the details of a scheme for improving the arrangements for the transit of immigrants by rail, and he has much pleasure in acknowledging the ready consideration given by that Government to the suggestions which he has put forward. He trusts that the orders which are now being passed will effectually put a stop to the embarkation of infected batches. The proposals made by Dr. Campbell, and referred to in paragraphs 15, 16, and 17 of the Chief Commissioner's Resolution No. 1275R., dated the 15th April 1897, with regard to the amendment of the rules relating to the supply of clothing to emigrants and the arrangements for deck space and feeding on board the steamers, are still, the Chief Commissioner understands, under the consideration of the Bengal Government; the steps which are being taken to regulate feeder steamers in the Surma Valley have already been referred to, and Dr. Campbell's recommendations for the improvement of debarkation depôts and the provision of shelters at halting stages between the depôts and the gardens have either already been, or shortly will be, given effect to. It was found impossible to obtain the services of a Military Assistant Surgeon as Travelling Inspector of Emigrants during the past emigration season, but District Officers and Civil Surgeons were instructed to inspect frequently steamers carrying emigrants within their respective jurisdictions. The Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to record that the recruiting season of 1897-98 has been exceptionally free from cholera on the river.

16. The following figures based on reports furnished by the Hospital Assistants in charge of debarkation depôts in Sylhet and Cachar, relate only to the mortality which occurred amongst the immigrants and their dependents who passed through the depôts:

Mortality during transit to the Surma Valley.

District.	Year.	Number of immigrants who passed through the depôts.	Deaths		
			En route from Goalundo.	At the depôts.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	1897	2,808	19	46	65
	1896	1,904	32*	25	57
	1895	3,385	23*	26	49
Sylhet	1897	7,338	25	55	80
	1896	4,552	19	9	28
	1895	10,840	10	35	45

* At on steamers.

These figures cannot be accepted as very accurate, even in respect of the depôt

coolies to whom alone they refer, while no information is available as to the mortality amongst the 18,833 immigrants who did not pass through the depôts. It was stated in paragraph 22 of last year's report that steps were being taken to introduce a special form of waybill proposed by Dr. Campbell, which would contain information regarding every immigrant embarking on the steamers. The Chief Commissioner has since accepted a suggestion of the Government of Bengal to utilise for the purpose the existing form of waybill, and he hopes that it will be possible to obtain correct statistics of mortality among immigrants to the Surma Valley of all classes during the next recruiting season. The number of coolies travelling by steamers to that valley will, however, be largely reduced, now that the Assam-Bengal Railway has been opened as a sanctioned route for immigrants.

Anti-cholera inoculation.

17. Arrangements were made during the year, with the co-operation of the Government of Bengal, for obtaining trustworthy statistics of the protection afforded to immigrants in transit by anti-cholera inoculation. Lists of emigrant coolies inoculated at Purulia were sent to the managers of the gardens concerned, who were requested to return them after noting in blank columns provided for the purpose the number of inoculated coolies who died of cholera (1) before embarkation, (2) between the port of embarkation and the garden, and (3) after arrival on the garden. The information so obtained is shown in the following table:

Statement showing number of Deaths from Cholera amongst inoculated coolies during the year 1897.

District.	Number of inoculated coolies imported.	Number of deaths from cholera among coolies shown in column 2				Remarks.
		Between recruiting district and port of embarkation.	Between port of embarkation and garden.	After arrival on garden.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	916	...	3	...	3	
Sylhet	583	...	4	2	6	
Kamrup	30	...	....	...	...	
Darrang	644	2	14	6	22	
Nowgong	933	...	1	2	3	
Sibsagar	833	...	2	...	2	
Lakhimpur	2,604	5	8	2	15	
Total	6,543	7	32	12	51	

The vital statistics of coolies travelling to the Surma Valley are so imperfectly recorded, that it is impossible to institute any useful comparison between the death-rate of inoculated and non-inoculated coolies in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar. Comparing the deaths from cholera among the general body of immigrants to the Assam Valley shown in paragraph 14 of this report with the mortality exhibited in the above table, and confining them in both cases to the mortality *en route* between the port of embarkation and tea garden, it appears that the general cholera death-rate was 1·67 per cent., and that the death-rate among inoculated coolies was ·49 per cent. only.

Inoculation against cholera is still in the experimental stage, and it is of the greatest importance, in the interests of science, to ascertain the period for which protection is afforded. It is therefore proposed to prescribe a half-yearly return showing the deaths from cholera on tea gardens among inoculated and uninoculated coolies, distributing the deaths from cholera of inoculated persons into the following periods:—(1) within six months of inoculation; (2) between six and twelve months; (3) between one and two years; and (4) after two years; and a second statement suggested by Dr. Haffkine, giving details of the deaths of inoculated persons during cholera epidemics. The Chief Commissioner is extremely reluctant to add to the list of returns at present required from the managers of estates, but he is confident that they will gladly help in furnishing information of this nature, which is of such importance to the welfare of the tea industry.

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

18. As in previous years, all cases of alleged fraud or irregularity in connection with the recruitment of labourers were carefully investigated. Enquiries are made at Dhubri in three classes of cases, *viz.*—

(*a*) in consequence of communications received from the districts of recruitment, either in the form of a letter from the Magistrate or Subdivisional Officer or District Superintendent of Police, or in the form of a petition or letter by post from the relatives of the person supposed to have been fraudulently recruited;

(*b*) on complaints made by the person concerned at Dhubri at the time of registration; and

(*c*) in cases in which no such complaint is made, when the registering officer thinks that it is likely that any fraud has been practised in the recruitment of women or young persons who come unaccompanied by relatives, and who seem hardly capable of looking after themselves.

It is satisfactory to find that, though the number of immigrants to the Assam Valley was 66,952 in 1897, as compared with 42,384 in 1896, the number of complaints of the (*a*) class fell from 74 to 30. The reason for this improvement is to be found in the facilities which existed for legitimate recruiting and the consequent absence of temptation to have recourse to malpractices. The number of cases disposed of in the year was 37. It appears that in 24 cases the persons who formed the subject of complaint could not be traced, and there was nothing to show that they had come to Assam at all. In five cases the persons were traced and returned to their homes, but the complaints instituted were dropped, compounded, or dismissed. In five cases the persons concerned were traced, but no further steps were taken by the authorities in the recruiting districts. The contract of one woman repatriated in the previous year was cancelled. In one case two persons were convicted and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment—one for seven months and one for four months—and in one case, which was committed to the sessions, the accused were all acquitted.

There were no cases of the (*b*) class during the year.

In four cases of the (*c*) class, the whereabouts of the persons concerned were communicated to their relatives, but no steps were taken for their recovery, and it appeared that the immigrants had come to Assam of their own free-will.

Cases enquired into in the labour districts.

19. The following table shows the total number of cases enquired into in the actual labour districts during the past two years, and distributes them according as they were ultimately declared true, false, or not proved:

District.	Complaints.		True cases.		False cases.		Not proved.		Pending.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	7	37	7	37	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	7	8*	7	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	6	1	1	1	2	...	3	...	...	...
Darrang	18	2	13	...	...	...	4	...	1	2
Nowgong ...	5	2	1	...	...	...	3	2	1	...
Sibsagar	38	26	17	11	5	4	9	11†	7	...
Lakhimpur ...	47	34	21	10	12	11	10	9	4	4
Total	128	110	67	67	19	15	29	22	13	6

* This includes 4 cases of coolies who were recruited for Cachar, but were repatriated from Sylhet.
† Ditto one case in which the emigrant was not traceable.

In spite of the increase in the number of immigrants, there was a falling-off in the number of complaints, except in the district of Cachar, where the number rose from 7 to 37. Sixty-seven out of 110 cases were shown as true. Under the

orders of the Chief Commissioner strict proof is not demanded in these cases, but contracts are cancelled and coolies repatriated whenever there is reasonable suspicion that irregularities in connection with recruitment have occurred. The Administration is well supported by the managers of tea estates in its efforts to suppress fraudulent recruiting, and in the case of no less than 18 persons about the legality of whose recruitment there was some question, the contracts were cancelled by mutual consent, and the coolies repatriated at the expense of the garden without awaiting the orders of the Chief Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, makes the following remarks:

I am glad to be able to report that several concerns in this district have been able to establish the position with their contractors that no payments will be made in respect of persons subsequently declared to have been fraudulently recruited and repatriated on that ground. Indeed, one concern has gone further, and under the terms of his contract with the contractors, the Superintendent returns at the contractors' expense any coolies found to have been misdescribed in their contract.

20. The cases included in the above table are classified below separately for the two valleys, so as to show how many of the persons concerned had executed contracts of any description, and when they were under contract, where the contracts were executed:

		Number of cases disproved of.	Number of persons.	Number under contract.			Number not under contract.	Contracts executed in				
				Act I of 1882.	Other forms of contracts	Not stated.		Recruiting districts.	Calcutta or Garden.	Dhubri.	Labour districts.	Not stated.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Surma Valley ...	True	45	51	39	6	...	6	28	17	...	...	...
	False	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Not proved ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total		45	51	39	6	...	6	28	17	...	...	...
Assam Valley ...	True	22	30	28	1	...	1	8	5	16	...	...
	False	15	19	16	1	2	...	9	2	6	...	2
	Not proved ...	22	43	35	1	7	...	5	17	14	...	7
Total		59	92	79	3	9	1	22	24	36	...	9
Grand total		104	143	118	9	9	7	50	41	36	...	9
Grand total for 1896		*115*	*144*	*119*	*11*	*10*	*4*	*46*	*12*	*75*	*1*	*6*

None of these cases call for special comment. They simply repeat in various forms the old story of rogue and dupe. Seventy contracts were cancelled by the Chief Commissioner under section 11A of Act I of 1882, and the persons executing them repatriated at the expense of their employers, against 56 in the preceding year. Six persons were repatriated by order of Inspectors and Magistrates in the labour districts under section 142E. The system of taking the thumb prints of coolies executing contracts was in force throughout the year. Only two cases, however, were reported in which the execution of a contract denied by the coolie concerned was proved by this means.

CHAPTER II.

LABOUR FORCE.

21. The following figures, taken from the statement which forms an appendix to this report, show the additions to, and deductions from, the total labour force of the province during the year 1897:

Statistics of the labour force.

Labour force remaining at the end of 1896		588,879	
ADDITIONS—			
Imported by contractors or garden sardars, including free labourers and dependents imported direct		95,931	
Local labour contracts entered into under sections 111 and 112 of Act I of 1882 ...		29,988	
Received from other gardens ...		8,597	
Deserters recaptured ...		471	
Remaining after expiry of contract		33,052	
Otherwise obtained ...		23,828	
Births		15,046	
Total of additions		206,913	
DEDUCTIONS—			
Transferred to other gardens ...			7,110
Left with permission or on expiry of contract			74,862
Deaths			26,120
Desertions			30,303
Free labourers put under contract			21,174
Contracts cancelled under section 11A			70
Contracts cancelled under sections 111, 140, or 177, Act I of 1882			20
Contracts cancelled under section 122			999
Contracts cancelled under section 129			51
Contracts redeemed under section 142			25
Contracts dissolved by mutual consent			2,250
Total of deductions			162,984
Net increase during the year ...			43,929
Grand total at the close of the year			632,808

The total labour force at the end of the year thus exceeded that at the end of 1896 by 43,929 souls, or 7·4 per cent. In 1896 the corresponding increase was 51,567, or 9·6 per cent.

22. The statement below shows the total labour force at the beginning of each of the last three years, and the mean strength for the two half-years of 1897:

Mean strength of the labour force.

Class of labourers.	1st January 1895.	1st January 1896.	1st January 1897.	1st July 1897.	Mean strength for the first half-year of 1897.	31st December 1897.	Mean strength for the second half-year of 1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Act adults	116,550	125,798	135,670	151,726	143,698	148,192	149,959
Non-Act { Adults	192,372	216,091	241,124	264,299	252,712	251,783	258,041
Non-Act { Children	185,062	195,423	212,085	233,345	222,715	232,833	233,089
Total	493,984	537,312	588,879	649,370	619,125	632,808	641,089

23. The total labour force of each district and the variations in strength during the year 1897 are given below:

District figures of the labour force.

District.	1st January 1897.	31st December 1897.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	122,750	125,173	19·8	+ 2,423	+ 2·1
Sylhet	140,424	143,483	22·7	+ 3,059	+ 2·2
Total Surma Valley	263,174	268,656	42·5	+ 5,482	+ 2·1
Kamrup	3,739	3,776	·6	+ 46	+ 1·2
Darrang	65,485	71,284	11·3	+ 5,799	+ 8·8
Nowgong	19,237	21,189	3·3	+ 1,952	+ 10·1
Sibsagar	129,002	142,960	22·6	+ 13,958	+ 10·7
Lakhimpur	108,251	124,943	19·7	+ 16,692	+ 15·4
Total Assam Valley	325,705	364,152	57·5	+ 38,447	+ 11·8
Grand total	588,879	632,808	100·0	+ 43,929	+ 7·4

As in 1895 and 1896, the labour force has increased in every tea district in the province.

24. The following table shows the nationality and sex of the adult labour force during the last two years:

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

	Nationality.	Sex.	Act. 1896.	Act. 1897.	Non-Act. 1896.	Non-Act. 1897.	Total. 1896.	Total. 1897.	Ratio of nationality.
1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	37,871	41,029	43,994	47,139	81,865	88,168	43·2
		Women	32,716	35,732	43,838	48,761	76,554	84,493	
	Behar ...	Men ...	5,074	4,926	9,425	9,486	14,499	14,412	6·7
		Women	4,158	4,078	8,377	8,422	12,535	12,500	
	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	10,304	9,632	23,051	23,646	33,355	33,298	17·6
		Women	10,720	10,076	26,004	27,146	36,724	37,222	
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.		Men ..	6,261	5,868	30,224	28,189	36,485	34,057	17·1
		Women	4,990	4,812	29,932	29,520	34,922	34,332	
Central Provinces ...		Men ...	9,328	13,299	5,140	7,265	14,468	20,564	9·6
		Women	7,409	11,293	3,804	6,597	11,213	17,890	
Madras		Men ...	2,181	2,743	2,740	2,627	4,921	5,370	2·6
		Women	1,567	1,970	2,791	2,830	4,358	4,800	
Bombay		Men ...	35	25	114	43	149	68	...
		Women	21	18	96	34	117	52	
Nepal		Men ...	49	38	151	60	200	98	...
		Women	22	19	143	62	165	81	
Assam		Men ...	1,727	1,556	8,492	7,117	10,219	8,673	3·2
		Women	1,237	1,058	2,808	2,839	4,045	3,897	
Total		Men ...	72,830	79,136	123,331	125,572	196,161	204,708	...
		Women	62,840	69,056	117,793	126,211	180,633	195,267	...
Grand total ...		...	135,670	148,192	241,124	251,783	376,794	399,975	...

The proportions of labourers from the Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas and the Central Provinces have increased by 1 and 2 per cent., respectively, at the expense of Bengal Proper and Orissa and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

25. The following figures show the number of labourers of each nationality who are employed in each of the two principal divisions into which the tea districts of the province fall:

	Surma Valley.	Assam (Brahmaputra) Valley.
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	38,920	133,741
Behar	14,388	12,524
Bengal Proper and Orissa	39,032	31,488
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	55,098	13,291
Central Provinces	10,589	27,865
Madras	6,205	3,965
Bombay	34	86
Nepal	53	126
Assam	689	11,881

26. The percentage of Act and non-Act labourers belonging to each nationality is shown below:

Nationality.	1896.	1897.		
	Total.	Act labourers	Non-Act labourers.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
Bengal — Chota Nagpur	42·0	51·8	38·1	43·2
Bengal — Behar	7·2	6·1	7·1	6·7
Bengal — Bengal Proper and Orissa	18·6	13·3	20·2	17·6
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	19·0	7·2	22·9	17·1
Central Provinces	0·8	10·6	5·5	9·6
Madras	2·5	3·2	2·2	2·6
Assam	3·8	1·8	4·0	3·2
Nepal	·1	...	...	...
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

27. The mean strength of the labour force in each district for each half-year of 1897 and for the whole year is shown in the following table. The percentages of mortality and desertions are calculated on these figures:

Mean strength of the labour force in each district.

District.	Act.			Non-Act. Adults.			Non-Act. Children.			Total annual strength.		
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	5,824	5,233	5,528	74,900	75,953	74,676	45,464	46,414	45,939	126,589	126,800	126,194
Sylhet ...	12,955	13,274	13,115	75,372	75,406	75,389	56,721	57,889	57,300	145,039	146,569	145,804
Kamrup ...	587	606	596	2,169	2,134	2,152	1,192	1,230	1,211	3,948	3,977	3,959
Darrang ...	28,999	29,814	29,406	18,439	18,670	18,704	22,647	24,201	23,424	70,085	72,685	71,535
Nowgong ...	7,162	7,854	7,508	7,205	7,207	7,205	6,541	6,823	6,682	20,908	21,885	21,397
Sibsagar ...	43,227	45,168	44,132	40,605	42,831	41,718	52,453	55,354	53,843	136,285	143,245	139,755
Lakhimpur ...	44,041	47,916	46,418	34,610	36,439	35,529	37,726	41,277	39,501	117,289	125,633	121,460
Total	143,693	149,859	146,828	252,712	258,041	255,376	222,215	233,089	227,902	619,125	641,689	630,107

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

Number of contracts made.

28. The number of contracts executed under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act in 1897 is shown below, and compared with the number executed in 1896 :

	1896.	1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
In the actual labour districts under section 111 of the Act.	14,782	15,265	+ 3·2
In the actual labour districts under section 112 of the Act.	14,133	14,723	+ 4·2
At Dhubri under section 112A of the Act ...	12,957	14,893	+14·9
In the recruiting districts	16,351	25,625	+56·7
Total	58,223	70,506	+21·1

There was a large increase in the total number of contracts executed, which was especially marked in the case of contracts executed in the recruiting districts. The causes of this increase have already been explained.

29. The above figures refer only to contracts executed under the provisions of Act I of 1882. In addition to these a very large number of contracts are executed under Act XIII of 1859; no statistics are available, but it is known that in the Surma Valley, at any rate, the great majority of labourers are bound by the provisions of this Act. The following statement shows the number of contracts returned as executed under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code during the past two years :

	1896.	1897.
Cachar	686	486
Sylhet	404	451
Kamrup	14	21
Darrang	...	...
Nowgong	...	...
Sibsagar	2,723	1,917
Lakhimpur	1,555	...
Total	5,382	2,905

It is impossible to place much reliance on these figures, as there is a tendency amongst employers to confuse contracts under this section with contracts under Act XIII of 1859. There was a marked decrease in the Sibsagar district, for which the Deputy Commissioner gives no explanation, and the figures supplied by him apparently include coolies who have entered into contract under Act XIII of 1859. In Lakhimpur the section has hitherto been used only by the Assam Railways and Trading Company, and the Deputy Commissioner is inclined to suppose that it is still employed by them, and that its omission from their returns is due to a mistake.

30. The following table shows the number of local contracts executed under sections 111 and 112 of the Act, and the sex and nationality of the labourers entering into such contracts :

Nationality of labourers executing local contracts.

District.	Sex.	Contracts under section 111.	Contracts under section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality.										Total of columns 3 and 4.
				Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Bombay.	Nepal.	Assam.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14
Cachar ...	Men ...	19	79	13	6	13	30	32	2	...	...	...		98
	Women ...	8	41	3	...	8	19	19	...	...	...	...		49
	Total of 1897 ...	27	120	18	6	21	49	51	2	...	...	...		147
	,, ,, 1896 ...	227	608	206	37	290	351	12	...	...	...	...		835
Sylhet ...	Men ...	2,403	993	872	445	532	457	220	575	...	1	4		3,396
	Women ...	1,583	814	641	306	536	376	185	742	...	...	11		2,797
	Total of 1897 ...	4,286	1,807	1,513	751	1,068	833	405	1,317	...	1	15		6,193
	,, ,, 1896 ...	4,209	1,435	1,422	758	1,007	1,374	216	907	...	1	9		5,764
Kamrup ...	Men ...	...	14	4	...	2	...	11	...	...	...	...		14
	Women ...	1	11	3	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	...		12
	Total of 1897 ...	1	25	7	...	2	...	22	...	...	...	...		26
	,, ,, 1896 ...	2	6	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		8
Darrang ...	Men ...	1,985	1,754	1,304	188	220	269	243	86	...	1	774		3,439
	Women ...	1,684	517	1,075	140	355	185	148	116	...	...	183		2,211
	Total of 1897 ...	3,669	2,681	2,439	331	475	454	391	202	...	1	1,057		5,650
	,, ,, 1896 ...	3,060	2,062	2,072	252	615	172	154	344	...	13	1,497		6,202
Nowgong ...	Men ...	307	138	277	17	84	24	37	2	...	...	4		445
	Women ...	251	40	161	19	88	14	27	1	...	...	1		311
	Total of 1897 ...	558	178	438	36	172	38	64	3	...	...	5		756
	,, ,, 1896 ...	509	93	430	34	111	23	52	9	...	...	1		660
Sibsagar ...	Men ...	1,447	3,833	2,535	478	769	993	297	91	...	...	201		4,969
	Women ...	1,113	3,061	2,623	297	734	853	173	55	...	...	190		4,207
	Total of 1897 ...	2,570	6,897	5,159	770	1,503	846	470	146	...	...	391		8,867
	,, ,, 1896 ...	2,018	5,571	5,312	796	1,191	900	240	108	...	1	101		8,483
Lakhimpur ...	Men ...	2,078	2,608	1,603	118	410	219	274	79	19	31	31		4,684
	Women ...	1,938	2,007	3,031	77	436	109	287	60	...	...	14		3,965
	Total of 1897 ...	4,031	4,615	4,634	195	846	328	561	139	19	31	45		8,649
	,, ,, 1896 ...	3,898	4,390	5,501	155	708	221	271	171	4	3	87		7,144
Grand total of 1897		15,265	14,273	16,201	2,089	4,077	2,248	1,866	1,109	19	33	1,443		29,988
,, ,, ,, 1896		14,782	14,133	15,274	2,232	3,941	2,431	845	1,713	4	18	2,257		28,915

Contracts under section 111 are for a term of one year only, but can be executed without the intervention of a Magistrate. Contracts under section 112 may extend to a term of four years, but can only be enterd into in the presence of a Magistrate or Inspector. The extent to which the different sections are used varies considerably in different districts. In Sylhet, Darrang and Nowgong section 111 is the more popular. In Lakhimpur, in spite of a large increase in the number executed under section 111, there was still a slight preference for section 112, while in Sibsagar, as in the previous year, the number of short-term contracts was small in comparison with the number for a term exceeding one year. This variation in practice depends principally on the personal idiosyncracy of the managers concerned. The advantages of section 112 are to be found in the length of the contract and the saving of stamp duty, the fee levied under the Act being irrespective of the length of the contract: the disadvantages in the fact that the agreement can only be executed in the presence of an Inspector or Magistrate, while the payment of the larger bonus entails a considerable capital expenditure, the greater part of which is completely lost to the garden if the coolie dies or deserts during the earlier stages of his agreement.

31. The following table gives details of local contracts executed in the actual labour districts, the classes of labourers who entered into them, and the periods of the contracts :

Details of local contracts.

District.	Section 111.	Section 112.	Class of labourers.				Number of years.					
			Newly-imported.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolies transferred.	Local.	Under one year.	One.	Two.	Under two and a half.	Three.	Four.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	27	120	110	37	...	...	...	27	9	...	111	...
Sylhet	4,386	1,809	1,809	3,097	...	387	...	4,386	29	3	1,619	156
Kamrup	1	25	22	4	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	25
Darrang	3,669	1,681	...	4,147	...	1,203	243	3,529	1,030	21	320	197
Nowgong	578	178	...	111	...	645	...	578	83*	...	41	54
Sibsagar	2,570	6,297	192	8,047	...	628	215	3,057	1,395†	1,233	2,500‡	4596
Lakhimpur	4,034	4,615	83	8,260	...	306	...	4,034	3,508	26	649	432
Total of 1897	15,265	14,723	2,216	24,693	...	3,169	458	15,612	6,074	1,283	5,240	1,331
Total of 1896	*14,782*	*14,133*	*2,549*	*22,283*	*2*	*4,081*	*206*	*15,590*	*9,089*	*257*	*2,711*	*1,062*

* Includes one contract for 1½ years.
† ,, 421 contracts under 2 years.
‡ Includes 1,684 contracts under 3 years.
§ ,, 337 ,, ,, 4 ,,

Out of a total number of 29,988 contracts, only 2,216 were executed by newly-imported labourers, and of these, 81·6 per cent. were executed in the one district of Sylhet. The remainder were executed by time-expired or local labourers: 52·1 per cent. of the agreements were for one year only; 20·2 per cent. for two; 9·9 per cent. for periods between two and three years, and 13·0 per cent. for three years and over, and only 3·3 per cent. for the full term of four years.

32. The periods of the contracts executed at Dhubri in 1896 and 1897 are shown below :

Periods of contracts executed at Dhubri.

Year.	Three-year contracts.			Four-year contracts.			Total contracts.		
	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1896	120	91	211	12,387	6,450	19,287	12,527	6,541	19,498
1897	225	162	387	14,668	10,911	25,579	14,893	11,073	25,966

Practically, the whole of the contracts executed at Dhubri were for the full term of four years. Contracts for the maximum term allowed by law are obviously most advantageous to employers, and, as immigrants are as ready to execute agreements for four as for three years, as a rule, they entail no additional expense.

Verification of contracts.

33. The following table shows the extent to which local contracts executed direct between employer and labourer under section 111 were verified by the Magistrate or Inspector in 1897:

District.	Number of contracts under section 111.			Number verified.	Number not capable of verification on account of					Percentage of contracts verified.	
	Remaining unverified at close of previous year.	Executed during the year.	Total.		Expiry of contracts.	Death or desertion of labourer.	Sickness of the labourer.	Other causes.	Total.	(a) On total number of contracts.	(b) On contracts capable of verification.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	78	27	105	105	...	...	...	...	...	100·0	100·0
Sylhet	558	4,386	4,944	4,425	552	85	37	245	719	85·4	100·0
Kamrup	1	2	3	2	...	...	...	1	1	66·6	100·0
Darrang	737	3,659	4,406	3,636	103	23	11	633	770	82·5	100·0
Nowgong...	35	578	613	500	17	11	3	82	113	81·5	100·0
Sibsagar	411	2,570	2,981	2,644	32	23	13	269	337	88·6	100·0
Lakhimpur	248	4,034	4,282	3,328	104	6	9	845	964	77·4	100·0
Total	2,069	15,265	17,334	14,450	608	148	73	2,075	2,904	83·2	100·0

Of the total number of contracts executed, 83·2 per cent. were verified, as compared with 78·9 per cent. in the preceding year, the remainder being incapable of verification owing to various causes, such as the absence of the labourer on recruiting duty, or the execution of the contract after the annual inspection of the garden.

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

34. The following table shows the number of contracts which expired by lapse of time, the number of such expiries reported, and the number of contracts which were cancelled or determined during the year under the different sections of the Act:

District.	Number shown in garden returns as time-expired.	Number of time-expired contracts reported under section 141.	Number cancelled under section 112.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 112.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 118.	Number suspended by Inspector for temporary infirmity—section 120.	Number cancelled by Inspector for permanent incapacity—section 122.	Number made void by finding of committee or by orders of Local Government in cases of absence of cohabitation—sections 129 and 132.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140A.	Number redeemed under section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	1,355	1,353	31	...	...	...	28	31	...	...	15	49
Sylhet	5,647	5,638	4	...	...	...	198	...	...	...	...	169
Kamrup	114	85	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	4
Darrang	7,824	7,824	...	...	...	...	154	...	...	...	...	103
Nowgong	1,164	1,164	3	...	1	...	165	18	...	...	3	94
Sibsagar	11,566	12,530*	19	...	...	...	152	...	...	...	2	964
Lakhimpur ...	12,513	11,466	13	...	...	...	301	...	...	1	5	867
Total of 1897 ...	40,213	40,062	70	...	1	...	999	69	...	1	25	2,250
„ „ 1896 ...	33,641	33,867	56	...	...	...	1,159	315	...	1	4	1,250

* This includes 664 contracts, which were dissolved by mutual consent.

35. *Section* 141.—*Notice of determination of contracts.*—As in previous years, in all districts, except Sibsagar, only those contracts were reported which expired by efflux of time. This error in procedure will be rectified by the orders which were issued at the close of the year directing district officers to take steps to ensure that the determination of all contracts, in whatever way cancelled, should be reported to them. In Lakhimpur, there was a failure to report no fewer than 1,077 contracts which expired by efflux of time. No explanation has been furnished of this neglect to comply with the law, but the matter is engaging the attention of the Deputy Commissioner.

36. *Section* 11A.—*Cancelment of contracts for irregularities of recruitment.*—Seventy contracts were cancelled under section 11A, as compared with 56 in the previous year. The coolies were in all cases repatriated at the expense of their employers, but the Chief Commissioner is glad to observe that in some cases the money thus expended has been recovered from the contractors responsible. It is to be hoped that in the course of time this practice may become the rule rather than the exception, and that it will have a salutary effect in checking irregularities in recruitment.

37. *Cancelment of local contracts under sections* 111*A and* 111*B.*—In spite of the fact that over 15,000 contracts were executed during the year under section 111, only one was cancelled under section 111B, and none under section 111A.

38. *Section* 122.—*Cancelment of contracts for permanent incapacity.*—The number of contracts cancelled during 1896 and 1897 in each district owing to the persons bound by them becoming permanently incapacitated for labour, the proportion of such labourers who were newly imported, and the agency by which they were imported, are shown in the statement below:

District.	Number of contracts cancelled under section 122.		Newly imported.	Agency by which imported.		
	1896.	1897.		Contractor.	Sardar.	Locally engaged.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	11	28	2	20	8	...
Sylhet	377	198	29	144	13	41
Kamrup	...	1	1	1	...	...
Darrang	87	154	...	45	109	...
Nowgong	159	165	19	155	7	3
Sibsagar	240	152	92	123	25	4
Lakhimpur	285	301	...	269	29	3
Total	1,159	999	143	757	191	51

In spite of the large increase in the number of labourers who came to the province, there was a considerable decrease in the number of contracts cancelled under section 122. The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, remarks as follows:

> Employers in this district resort very freely to this section. Frequently they send in coolies who have only just arrived from their country to be sent back as permanently unfit. This is usually done on the advice of the European medical officer, who does not consider the people likely to thrive here, and the employer prefers to let his first loss be his last.

The Chief Commissioner would be glad to see this practice extending, as it is undoubtedly to the interest of both planter and coolie. But he has found that in some cases the provisions of the section are abused, and that moribund coolies are occasionally sent into the Government dispensaries with a view to the cancelment of their contract under this section. In such cases he has directed that the contract should not be cancelled until the coolie is in a fit state to travel. He observes that, as a fact, new importations form only a small proportion of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled, and that 20 coolies died after their contracts had been cancelled and before they could be repatriated, and he desires to impress upon Inspectors the necessity of exercising a sound discretion in the use of this section, which they should never allow to be employed as a means of lowering the death-rate of a garden, and seldom or never, unless the coolie concerned is in a fit state of health to undertake the journey back to his country.

39. *Contracts dissolved by mutual consent.*—The following table shows the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent during the past two years:

District.	1896.	1897.
Cachar	29	49
Sylhet	59	169
Kamrup	2	4
Darrang	124	103
Nowgong	3	94
Sibsagar	614	964
Lakhimpur	419	867
Total	1,250	2,250

In the Special Report on the working of Act I of 1882 during the years 1886—1889, the late Mr. Quinton remarked that he concurred in the opinion* expressed by nearly all his District Officers that it would be desirable that a definite procedure should be laid down for the cancelment of contracts by mutual consent, and that such cancelment should be prohibited, except in the presence of an Inspector or Magistrate. The Government of India, however, considered that as this procedure was already followed under executive orders, it was unnecessary to place it on a legal basis. The practice of cancelling contracts by mutual consent has largely increased during the last few years. In 1886, when there were 77,477 Act coolies in the province, only 155 contracts were so cancelled: ten years later the Act I population had increased to over 135,000 souls, and the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent was 1,250. During the past year there was a further large increase, and no less than 2,250 contracts were cancelled amongst an Act population of 148,192 persons. Thus, nearly 15 contracts were dissolved by mutual consent in 1897 for every one so terminated in 1886, though the Act population has not quite doubled in the intervening period. The Deputy Commissioners of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, where this practice is most prevalent, report that a large number of these contracts are dissolved merely as a preliminary to the execution of fresh ones, but in what proportion of cases this took place does not appear. The Chief Commissioner doubts whether sufficient attention is now paid to this question by District Officers. The practice of insisting upon a coolie being brought before a public officer as a preliminary to the dissolution of his contract, has fallen into abeyance, and there is a certain risk that the managers of some gardens may avail themselves of this loophole to escape from their obligations towards sickly or unsatisfactory labourers, and, by exercise of undue influence, may cancel by "mutual consent" contracts which should be cancelled under section 122 of the Act, if at all.

* Page 134 of the Report.

It would doubtless cause inconvenience if the production of the labourer before an Inspector were insisted on in cases in which the contract is cancelled *bonâ fide* for the purpose of replacing it by a new one, but Deputy Commissioners will be requested to make this a point of special enquiry at inspections, and to state in their reports for 1898, as far as they are able to do so, the actual number of coolies who dissolved their contracts by mutual consent, and afterwards executed fresh agreements.

40. *Sections 129 and 132—Contracts made void in consequence of estates being declared unfit for the residence of labourers.*—According to the statement given in paragraph 34, only 69 contracts were made void in consequence of the estates, on which the labourers concerned were employed, having been declared unfit for the residence of labourers generally, or of any particular class of labourers. The number of contracts so terminated is not large, but only four gardens were closed during the year, and of these, three were closed only to certain classes of labourers, while, as noted in last year's report, a labourer released under these sections from working on an unhealthy garden is liable to complete his contract on any other estate belonging to his employer situated in the same labour district.

41. *Section 142—Redemption of contracts.*—Twenty-five contracts were redeemed during the year, against 4 in 1896 and 8 in 1895. Fifteen cases of redemption occurred in the district of Cachar, but no details of these cases have been supplied by the Deputy Commissioner.

42. Section 170 of the Act provides that if an employer so wishes and complies with certain formalities, periods of voluntary absence from labour without reasonable cause shall be added to the original period of a labourer's contract, and section 121 makes similar provision for periods of sickness in excess of 30 days in the year. Employers, however, very rarely take advantage of the provisions of these sections.

Extent to which section 170 and the 2nd paragraph of section 121 are made use of.

43. The following statement gives certain particulars regarding the repatriation of labourers on tea gardens under the provisions of the Act :

Repatriation of labourers whose contracts were cancelled.

1	2																		3											
	Number of contracts cancelled																		Number of coolie repatriated											
District.	Under section 11A.		Under section 11B.		Under section 11D.		Under section 11E.		Under section 122.		Under section 140.		Under section 140A.		Total.		Under section 11C (section 11A).		Under section 140E (section 122).		Under section 140C.		Under section 140D (11A, 11B).		Under section 140E.		Total.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
Cachar	6	31	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	28	..	51	..	..	..	..	17	110	6	30	11	2	3	23	..	..	..	6	20	61
Sylhet	4	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	377	198	..	..	..	..	..	..	381	202	4	3	352	176	..	..	..	..	..	1	357	179
Kamrup	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Darrang	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	87	154	..	..	..	..	..	..	103	154	12	..	76	158	34	14	..	..	..	..	122	185
Nowgong	2	3	..	..	..	..	..	2	159	105	..	18	..	..	..	1	160	187	..	1	95	83	1	..	..	..	..	..	96	84
Sibsagar	14	19	..	..	..	..	..	..	349	152	6	..	..	..	..	..	369	171	14	19	318	131	..	..	..	..	..	..	332	150
Lakhimpur.. ..	16	13	..	..	..	..	..	..	585	302	117	..	..	..	1	..	418	315	..	13	299	238†	40	9	..	..	..	..	269	260
Total	56	70	..	..	..	..	..	2	1,152	999	123	69	..	..	1	1	1,448	1,140	36	66	931	782	78	46	..	1	6	1,096	900

4								5				
Coolies whose contracts were cancelled under section 122 and who were not repatriated.								Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.				
District.	Number who will be repatriated when a sufficient number of cases accumulate.		Number who preferred to remain on the gardens or in the district.		Number who died.		Number who absconded.		Number sent to a lunatic asylum.		Under section 140C.		Under section 140E.		Total.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
											Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	..	..	..	25	..	1	..	..	..	..	105 0 0	380 0 0	..	120	105 0 0	500 0 0
Sylhet	..	..	22	32	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kamrup	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Darrang	..	..	9	..	2	3	..	..	..	..	498 0 0	183 12 0	..	..	498 0 0	183 12 0
Nowgong	3	..	35	69*	25	13	4	7	..	..	15 0 0	..	..	..	15 0 0	..
Sibsagar	..	..	21	17	..	4	..	..	1	..	284 12 0	..	..	..	284 12 10	..
Lakhimpur.. ..	..	..	51	64	4	..	1	..	..	..	675 9 6	138 15 3	..	..	675 9 6	138 15 3
Total	3	..	138	191	34	20	5	7	1	..	1,478 6 4	702 12 3	..	120	1,476 6 4	822 12 3

* This includes 6 persons about whom reports have not been received from the managers concerned.
† Includes one coolie whose contract was cancelled under section 140A.

Of the 70 coolies whose contracts were cancelled under section 11A, 66 were repatriated under section 11C, and the cost of their repatriation recovered from the employers concerned. These results compare favourably with those of the preceding year, when the corresponding figures were 56 and 36, respectively, and show that the remarks made by the Chief Commissioner on the subject in last year's report have been understood and acted upon. The proportion of coolies repatriated among those whose contracts were cancelled under section 122 was less than in the preceding year, a larger number having elected to remain in the labour districts, where they had friends and relations, or could earn a living by light labour.

Wages.

44. The following table gives some idea of the wages earned by Act and non-Act coolies. The figures are based on information obtained by officers inspecting gardens, who are required to ascertain the wages paid during the month preceding that in which the inspection is held:

Subdivision.	Act.		Non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr... ...	4 8 10	3 4 11	4 8 11	3 4 11	2 4 1
Hailakandi	4 2 3	3 6 9	4 5 8	3 7 0	2 4 9
North Sylhet ...	4 8 2	3 6 9	4 8 11	3 8 2	2 0 10
South ,, ...	4 14 0	3 9 3	4 7 6	3 5 3	2 0 10
Karimganj	3 10 11	3 1 8	4 0 11	3 2 3	1 12 0
Habiganj	5 0 11	3 9 4	5 4 7	3 2 6	2 6 7
Kamrup	4 12 5	3 8 5	5 1 4	4 1 2	2 10 7
Darrang, sadr ...	4 12 7	4 5 6	5 8 8	4 2 4	2 8 8
Mangaldai	4 13 3	4 11 1	5 12 7	3 11 3	2 1 5
Nowgong	4 13 8	3 13 9	6 1 3	4 12 6	2 13 5
Sibsagar	5 6 2	4 2 6	5 8 10	3 13 3	2 5 3
Jorhat	5 8 0	4 4 3	6 1 0	4 1 3	2 6 2
Golaghat	4 11 4	3 9 0	5 0 4	3 7 7	2 3 1
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	5 4 6	3 14 10	6 7 10	4 13 9	2 15 0
North Lakhimpur ...	4 11 6	3 14 1	4 14 3	3 13 2	2 4 11

The above figures are somewhat misleading, as the wages earned vary considerably from month to month.

45. The table below shows separately the average wages paid to coolies during the manufacturing and non-manufacturing seasons, respectively. The wages in the manufacturing season are generally higher, as more *ticca* or extra work carrying with it extra pay is then done:

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr	Manufacturing	4 5 9	3 1 0	5 3 0	3 12 6	2 13 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 5	3 13 10	4 1 5	3 6 4	2 5 4
Hailakandi	Manufacturing	4 5 10	3 13 9	4 9 11	3 11 2	2 14 5
	Non-manufacturing ...	3 14 8	2 15 10	4 1 5	3 2 11	2 1 11
North Sylhet	Manufacturing	4 8 10	3 8 3	4 11 5	3 10 10	2 1 7
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 7 1	3 4 10	4 4 11	3 3 6	1 15 9
South Sylhet	Manufacturing	4 13 0	3 12 3	4 8 6	3 8 1	2 2 7
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 11 0	3 0 0	4 4 7	2 12 12	1 11 10
Karimganj	Manufacturing	3 10 11	3 1 8	3 14 3	3 2 3	2 1 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	...	...	4 4 4	3 2 5	1 14 5
Habiganj	Manufacturing	5 1 3	3 12 1	5 8 6	4 8 11	2 11 9
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 5 2	3 9 0	5 0 11	4 1 4	2 5 4
Kamrup	Manufacturing	5 5 8	3 12 9	5 7 6	4 3 8	2 12 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 6 4	3 5 7	4 14 0	3 12 11	2 9 10
Darrang, sadr	Manufacturing	5 11 2	4 13 7	6 9 8	4 2 4	2 11 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 15 8	3 14 5	5 15 4	3 8 11	2 3 2
Mangaldai	Manufacturing	5 12 7	4 5 4	5 11 4	3 11 8	2 4 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 13 8	3 15 1	4 13 1	3 3 4	1 15 8
Nowgong	Manufacturing	5 0 9	4 0 7	6 2 6	4 13 0	2 14 6
	Non-manufacturing ...	3 8 0	2 9 1	5 3 3	4 5 1	2 6 9

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Sibsagar, sadr ...	Manufacturing	5 12 0	4 5 3	5 15 2	3 15 9	2 6 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	5 0 4	3 15 0	5 2 7	3 10 9	2 4 6
Jorhat	Manufacturing	5 1 5	4 1 1	6 2 2	3 8 6	3 12 4
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 1	3 0 2	5 1 6	3 3 4	2 6 8
Golaghat	Manufacturing	4 15 10	3 14 6	5 7 2	3 11 8	2 5 4
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 6 10	3 3 7	4 9 6	3 3 7	2 0 10
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	Manufacturing	5 7 9	4 6 6	7 0 3	5 6 4	3 2 6
	Non-manufacturing ...	5 1 3	3 7 3	5 15 6	4 5 3	2 11 6
North Lakhimpur ...	Manufacturing	4 10 9	4 0 6	4 7 7	3 12 6	2 6 9
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 12 4	3 12 3	5 4 12	3 13 11	2 3 1

In the report for 1896 the Chief Commissioner pointed out that during the forty years that have elapsed since coolies were first imported from Bengal, wages have practically remained stationary, though the price of all commodities in Assam during that time has largely increased, and that the question of raising the rate of wages was one, of which the consideration could not be much longer delayed. It is still possible for an industrious and able-bodied coolie, even at the present rates of pay, to lay by sufficient money out of his earnings to enable him after a few years to purchase cattle, seed, and implements, and engage in agriculture, and the large number of coolies who have risen to the status of peasant proprietors and independent cultivators is ample evidence that Assam affords a career to persons who, had they remained in their native districts, would never have emerged from a hand-to-mouth struggle for existence. It must not, however, be forgotten that a considerable number of immigrants, at any rate on their first arrival in the country, are physically unfitted to do a hard day's work, and Mr. Cotton is inclined to think that the low scale of wages is indirectly responsible for some portion of the mortality among Act coolies. The pay offered is not sufficient to attract the best class of labour, and the actual amount earned by sick and weakly coolies does not in all cases admit of their providing themselves with sufficient wholesome food to enable them to regain their health.

It is the practice on most gardens to feed weakly coolies at a general mess, and Mr. Cotton has heard of one Company, in which it is the rule to pay no men less than Rs. 4 and no women less than Rs. 3 per mensem, irrespective of their actual earnings, unless the coolies in question have been guilty of wilful malingering, or have absented themselves from work without reasonable cause. There must, however, be many individual instances where the coolie struggles on insufficient pay from month to month, and lays the seeds of dysentery and diarrhœa by consuming cheap and unwholesome food; and with a view to the detection of such cases, the Chief Commissioner considers it necessary that more attention should be paid to the inspection of the attendance register. There are many gardens in Assam where the lines, the water-supply and the hospital arrangements are of a permanent character, and leave nothing to be desired, and there is little for the inspecting officer to do beyond satisfying himself that the registers are correctly written up, and that every coolie on the estate receives a living wage, or its equivalent in food. With the high prices at present prevailing, Rs. 3 a month is probably the smallest amount on which a coolie can live and keep in good health, and it is the duty of inspecting officers to enquire carefully into each case in which this minimum is not attained, and, in the absence of special reasons to the contrary, to direct that the person concerned be fed in the general mess till such time as he or she is able to earn Rs. 3 per mensem at least. There is every reason to believe that if these instructions are carefully carried out, they will be attended by a considerable decrease in mortality. The past year was an extremely unhealthy one all over the province, and one large Company which employs many thousands of coolies, finding that its sick and death-rate were becoming unduly high, tried the experiment of ordering a weekly parade before the Company's medical officer, who then selected all weakly coolies, and directed that they should be fed at the hospital till further orders. It was found that this procedure had a most beneficial effect in lowering both the sick and death-rate, and the result confirms the Chief Commissioner in his apprehension that a considerable number of deaths are due to a preventable cause, *i.e.*, under-feeding.

CHAPTER IV.

OFFENCES, INCLUDING DESERTIONS.

46. The following table shows the number and description of offences against the Penal Code and other laws (excluding Act I of 1882 and Act XIII of 1859) committed by tea-garden coolies during the past two years :

Offences committed by the tea-garden population against the general criminal law.

District.	Offences under Penal Code.										Offences under Act V of 1861.	Offences under other Acts.	Grand total of all offences.
	Culpable homicide not amounting to murder.	Rioting and unlawful assem.	Causing hurt and grievous hurt.	Assault.	Theft.	Criminal trespass, house-trespass and house-breaking.	Dishonestly receiving stolen property.	Breach of contract—section 490.	Other offences under the Penal Code.	Total.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cachar	1	16	6	...	22	4	...	...	3	62	18	5	85
Sylhet	...	42	9	3	17	8	...	...	7	86	1	11	98
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	2
Darrang	1	73	1	3	5	6	1	...	7	97	6	1	104
Nowgong	...	...	...	1	4	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	5
Sibsagar	4	27	24	8	63	24	11	35	24	220	10	23*	243
Lakhimpur	...	23	23	32	54	29	10	...	22	191	14	30	235
Total of 1897	6	190	63	46	166	71	23	35	63	653	49	69	762
„ „ 1896	6	243	53	50	272	68	30	8	68	709	72	56	838

* Including two convictions under sections 106 and 550, Criminal Procedure Code, 18 under Excise Act, 1 Arms Act, and a Cattle Trespass Act,

In spite of the large increase in the labouring population that took place during the year, there was a satisfactory decrease in the total number of offences committed. There were fewer cases of rioting in every district of the province, except Darrang, where the number of convictions rose from 8 to 73. There appears to have been considerable unrest among tea-garden coolies in this district, but none of the outbreaks were of a serious character. There were 260 convictions for theft, trespass and house-breaking, and receiving stolen property,—a total which must be considered small for a population of four hundred thousand adults drawn from the lower strata of society. The majority of the offences under other Acts were breaches of the excise law. The ratio of crime per cent. amongst garden coolies was ·12, as compared with ·25 per cent. among the general population.

47. The following table shows the offences which were committed by the tea-garden population, and for which convictions were obtained for the past two years under Act I of 1882, excluding the offence of desertion, which is separately dealt with below :

Offences committed by the tea-garden population under Act I of 1882, excluding desertions.

District.	Act I of 1882.																	
	Section 151, garden sardar failing to report illness.		Section 152, garden sardar failing to comply with instructions regarding sick.		Section 154, labourers absent without leave, etc., after registration.		Section 156, employers failing to make, or keep registers, etc.		Section 158, employers neglecting to provide hospital accommodation.		Section 159, labourers absent without cause.		Section 178, labourers guilty of habitual drunkenness or wilful disregard of sanitary regulations.		Section 188, enticing away, harbouring or concealing labourer under contract.		Totals.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Cachar	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	7	1	8	1
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6*	11	4	11	4
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	1	...	3
Darrang	7	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	14	4	2	2	5	22	22
Nowgong	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	2	5	5
Sibsagar	19	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	5	...	2	13	11	39	33
Lakhimpur	13	11*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26	35	...	...	5	14	44	60
Total	41	37	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	38	57	4	2	40	38	129	129

* This includes two offences under section 159.

The total number of convictions under the special labour law was identical with that of 1896, and less than it had been for several years preceding—a result which, in view of the large increase in the Act I population, cannot but be considered highly satisfactory. There was a decrease in the number of cases of garden sardars failing to report themselves, and of enticing away agreement coolies, and an increase in the number of cases of absence from labour without cause.

48. The following table shows the number of desertions reported among the adult tea-garden population, district by district, for the past two years:

Desertions.

District.	Total desertions among adults.		Desertions among Act population.		Desertions among non-Act population.		Percentage of desertions on strength among					
							Act population.		Non-Act population.		Total adult population.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	3,162	5,800	728	624	2,434	5,176	11·14	11·05	3·51	6·92	4·20	7·22
Sylhet ...	7,482	9,046	1,272	1,316	6,210	7,730	10·61	10·02	8·95	10·24	9·18	10·21
Kamrup ...	266	379	23	34	243	345	4·16	5·69	11·56	15·99	10·04	13·78
Darrang ...	1,581	1,747	950	1,090	631	657	3·61	3·69	3·55	3·52	3·58	3·63
Nowgong ...	625	1,077	285	516	340	561	4·97	6·87	4·54	7·78	4·69	7·37
Sibsagar ...	2,366	2,654	1,234	1,300	1,132	1,354	3·11	2·94	2·95	3·23	3·03	3·08
Lakhimpur ...	2,113	2,967	1,184	1,552	929	1,415	2·92	3·33	2·85	3·90	2·90	3·61
Total	17,595	23,670	5,676	6,432	11,919	17,238	4·32	4·38	5·04	6·75	4·79	5·89

There was a considerable increase in the total number of desertions amongst adults, which was distributed over every district of the province, but was most conspicuous in Cachar, Sylhet and Lakhimpur. The percentage of desertion amongst Act coolies was, however, only very slightly larger than in 1896, and was smaller than that for several years preceding, and the increase in the total number of desertions occurred principally amongst non-Act coolies. The returns with regard to these coolies are misleading, and probably include many coolies who were not under any form of contract and who were shown as deserters, merely because they left the garden without permission.

The number of desertions amongst non-Act coolies in Cachar was exceptionally large, and is attributed by the Deputy Commissioner to the unhealthy character of the year. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet reports that the causes mentioned in last year's report still hold good, and quotes the following remarks from a report by the Subdivisional Officer of Habiganj:

> In Hill Tippera the coolies can get any amount of fertile land on very easy terms, and these coolies are also especially valued by the Hill Tippera authorities on account of their laborious habits and special aptitude for clearing jungle land. The great difficulty of arresting an absconder in Hill Tippera encourages such desertions.

This matter has formed the subject of correspondence between the Chief Commissioner and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

49. The following table shows for each district (1) the number of desertions of labourers under contract under Act I of 1882; (2) the number of warrants issued for the arrest of such deserters; (3) the number of such deserters arrested; and (4) the number convicted of desertion (section 175, Act I of 1882):

Arrests and convictions of deserters under Act contracts.

District.	Number of deserters (Act labourers).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested					Number convicted.
			By warrant.	By manager.	By police.	By summons.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	624	27	...	28	1	...	29	29
Sylhet	1,316	98	10	37	...	...	47	45
Kamrup	34	...	...	...	13	...	13	7
Darrang	1,090	115	37	43	1	...	81	81
Nowgong	516	24	7	31	...	...	38	36
Sibsagar	1,300	103	21	134	4	2	161	142
Lakhimpur	1,552	130	49	279	...	...	328	299
Total of 1897	6,432	497	124	552	19	2	697	639
,, ,, 1896	5,676	606	304	469	14	5	792	712

As usual, the number of warrants issued and the number of arrests made bear a very small proportion to the number of desertions, less than 10 per cent. of the absconders being convicted of the offence.

50. The manner in which complaints under Act XIII were dealt with during each of the past two years is shown in the table below:

Cases under Act XIII of 1859.

District.	Number of coolies convicted.		Number of coolies who were ordered to perform their contracts.		Number punished with imprisonment for				Cases withdrawn.		Number of coolies ordered to pay their advances or pay compensation.	
					Two weeks or less.		More than two weeks.					
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	61	25	52	22	6	1	3	2	26	27	...	...
Sylhet	4	24	3	19	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	4
Kamrup	4	3	3	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Darrang	13	14	13	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Nowgong	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	100	52	84	39	3	10	4	3	3	3	9	...
Lakhimpur... ...	17	37	14	36	1	1	2	...	...	...	...	...
Total	199	156	169	131	11	12	10	8	29	30	9	5

In spite of the large increase in the number of desertions, there was a marked decrease in the number of convictions, less than one per cent. of the total number of absconders coming under the orders of the court, and less than two per thousand being punished by imprisonment.

The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, in whose district there was a large increase in the number of desertions accompanied by a large decrease in the number of convictions, states that there is a growing feeling in Cachar that there is very little use in the majority of cases in taking out warrants under Act XIII of 1859.

51. The following table shows the proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens:

Proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

District.	Mean strength.		Number of desertions.		Percentage of desertions to labour force.		
	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	111,633	14,560	4,993	2,281	4·47	15·66	5·76
Sylhet	126,271	19,533	10,949	1,319	8·65	6·74	8·49
Kamrup	3,539	420	289	187	8·16	44·52	12·02
Darrang	60,633	10,902	1,123	915	1·85	8·39	2·48
Nowgong	18,615	2,782	1,096	264	5·91	9·54	6·39
Sibsagar	116,466	23,289	2,776	581	2·38	2·49	2·40
Lakhimpur	97,330	24,129	2,728	811	2·80	3·36	2·91
Total	534,487	95,615	23,945	6,358	4·40	6·64	4·81
Total of 1896	*533,622*	*39,786*	*19,180*	*2,354*	*3·58*	*6·22*	*3·76*

The total percentage of desertions shown in this statement is calculated on the whole labouring population, including children, and is therefore less than that shown in paragraph 48 above, which is calculated on the adult population only. Except in Sylhet and the two most easterly districts of the Assam Valley, the healthiness or unhealthiness of the garden had an important influence in determining the number of desertions. The abnormally high percentage (44·52) in Kamrup was due to a panic caused by the earthquake of June 12th on the one unhealthy garden in the district which was situated at the foot of the Khasi Hills, and suffered severely.

52. The following table shows the punishments inflicted during the past two years on Act labourers for desertion from healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively:

Punishment for desertion in the case of healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

	District.	Number of Act labourers convicted of the offence of desertion.		Number punished with imprisonment for																							
				Two months.		Six weeks.		One month.		Three weeks.		Fifteen days.		Two weeks.		Ten days.		One week.		One day.		Others.					
		1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23				
From healthy gardens.	Cachar ...	35	...	...	...	...	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	5	...	9	...	...	...				
	Sylhet ...	87*	37	...	1	...	...	13	4	13	1	11	7	14	7	16	5	17	6	2	1	...	5				
	Kamrup ...	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	1	...				
	Darrang ...	74	73	1	3	...	2	7	8	10	7	2	4	12	10	4	4	13	7	1	1	24	27‡				
	Nowgong ...	27	34	...	1	...	...	4	10	1	...	17	11	2	3	...	...	...	...	3	9	...	...				
	Sibsagar ...	182	102	1	...	4	1	16	12	2	...	15	6	24	25	33	10	56	29	24	13	7	6				
	Lakhimpur ...	254	234	1	2	5	9	30	14	36	18	20	29	58	15	3	56	40	50	15	32	46	16				
	Total ...	660	485	3	7	9	3	85	48	62	26	65	57	116	60	56	75	131	97	54	56	78	54				
From unhealthy gardens.	Cachar ...	...	29	...	...	...	...	...	12	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	13	...	...				
	Sylhet ...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...				
	Kamrup ...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1†	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...				
	Darrang ...	5	8	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	1	5	...	...	...	2‡				
	Nowgong ...	23	2	...	...	...	...	7	2	3	...	6	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...				
	Sibsagar ...	4	40	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	7	1	4	...	10	1	6	1	8	...	2				
	Lakhimpur ...	20	65	...	...	...	...	2	4	...	2	1	4	12	5	...	13	3	16	2	18	...	3				
	Total ...	52	154	...	1	...	...	10	20	3	6	7	18	19	15	...	24	9	24	3	39	1	7				

* Of these one was fined.

† And fine of Rs. 10 and another three weeks and a fine of Rs. 20 under section 183.

‡ Sent back to gardens.

53. The following table shows the nationality and sex of coolies who deserted :.

Nationality and sex of deserters.

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deserters.				Total.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
		Act.		Non-Act.				Act labourers.		Non-Act labourers.		Total.	
		1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Bengal. Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	Men	1,707	1,797	1,683	2,348	3,390	4,140	4·50	4·46	3·83	5·00	3·42	3·82
	Women	640	641	1,416	1,707	2,056	2,348	1·93	1·82	3·19	3·56		
Bengal. Behar	Men	341	273	525	528	866	803	6·55	5·40	5·85	5·48	5·24	4·40
	Women	137	63	365	341	502	404	3·27	1·50	4·67	4·00		
Bengal. Bengal Proper and Orissa	Men	481	597	855	1,299	2,336	1,896	4·76	5·89	3·77	5·52	3·15	4·47
	Women	234	247	606	1,034	840	1,281	2·10	2·34	5·23	33·8		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	Men	637	624	2,714	3,706	3,351	4,330	10·21	9·82	9·60	12·31	8·35	10·27
	Women	328	341	1,950	2,771	2,278	3,112	6·80	6·59	7·00	8·99		
Central Provinces	Men	654	1,129	419	893	1,073	2,022	9·27	9·08	13·23	13·89	8·75	8·67
	Women	198	471	274	550	472	1,021	5·72	4·52	12·66	9·81		
Madras	Men	100	110	113	392	213	502	4·64	4·40	4·04	14·47	3·53	8·91
	Women	44	40	76	332	120	372	2·76	2·19	·69	11·67		
Assam	Men	117	77	806	970	923	1,047	7·29	4·81	6·76	9·87	6·08	7·74
	Women	38	13	109	141	147	156	3·03	1·27	3·87	4·78		
Total	Men	4,037	4,613	7,120	10,232	11,177	14,865	5·76	5·86	5·82	7·15	5 80	7·15
	Women	1,619	1,819	4,799	6,986	6,418	8,805	2·48	2·65	4·21	4·54	3·67	4·34
Grand total		5,676	6,432	11,919	17,218	17,595	23,670	4·32	4·38	5·04	6·73	4·79	5·89

Percentages are not given for desertions of coolies from Bombay (48 males and 38 females) or Nepal (77 males and 53 females), as the total number of coolies of these nationalities is very small.

As in previous years, men deserted more freely than women, and the proportion of desertions was largest amongst coolies from the North-Western Provinces, Central Provinces and Madras.

It is sometimes the practice to speak of Act I of 1882, as though the advantages it conferred were all on the side of the planter. The elaborate provisions for the protection of the coolie which are stringently enforced are ignored, and attention is only directed to the fact that a coolie who declines to fulfil his contract without due cause is liable to imprisonment. That this point of view is misleading is shown by the statements included in this chapter, which disclose the fact that with an Act I population of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand souls, only 762 persons were punished under its penal clauses, and that, though 6,432 persons deserted from the gardens on which they were employed, only 124 were arrested under a warrant, and only 81 were sentenced to imprisonment of one month or upwards for the offence of desertion. It is true that the Act confers upon employers the right of arresting without a warrant absconding coolies, subject to certain restrictions, but it is more than doubtful whether the abolition of the Act would put a stop to this practice, which is after all exercised in its avowed form to a very limited extent. Coolies who leave a garden will frequently return if merely followed by a sardar and ordered to do so, and it will be impossible to prevent men from being ordered back in this way, *firstly*, because the coolie will not complain, and *secondly*, because no offence is, as a rule, committed by either the manager or his agents. On the other hand, it need hardly be pointed out that the repeal of the Act would deprive Government of a most valuable and essential power of interference in the labourer's behalf.

CHAPTER V.

VITAL STATISTICS AND HEALTH OF GARDEN POPULATION.

Birth-rate.

54. The following table shows the birth-rate per mille on tea gardens during each of the past two years:

District.	Birth-rate calculated on total garden population.		Birth-rate calculated on adult female population.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	21·8	23·6	71·4	76·7
Sylhet	24·7	23·8	80·3	76·7
Kamrup	26·6	33·6	79·4	97·3
Darrang	17·9	19·0	58·4	61·3
Nowgong	17·3	17·2	57·1	53·4
Sibsagar	23·6	25·0	81·1	85·2
Lakhimpur	24·8	26·5	79·1	83·6
Total	22·9	23·9	75·1	77·4

The proportion of females on tea gardens being much smaller than among the general population, the birth-rate must necessarily be smaller also. The last two columns have, therefore, been added to show the birth-rate calculated on the adult female population only. The estimated birth-rate in the province, excluding tea-garden coolies (which it need hardly be said is much higher than the rate according to actual registration) is 49·31 per 1,000 of the total, or 127 per 1,000 of the adult female population.

Birth-rate according to nationality.

55. The table below distributes the births amongst the different nationalities and shows the birth-rate among each class calculated on the mean strength of adult females:

	Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Assam.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average strength of women under Act I or otherwise.	82,897	12,693	37,405	35,958	16,286	4,675	4,101	194,192
Number of births	6,636	1,202	3,202	2,507	791	381	318	15,046
Birth-rate per 1,000	80·0	94·6	85·6	69·7	48·5	81·4	77·5	77·4
" " " (*1896*)	77·0	84·9	76·1	75·4	36·3	76·4	75·7	75·1

Births amongst females from Bombay (*nil*) and Nepal (9) are not shown, as the total population of these nationalities is very small.

There can be no doubt that the special conditions of life obtaining among the labouring population account to a great extent for the generally low birth-rate on tea gardens. The hard work in the open air, the change of climate, and in many cases *foeti*, must tend largely to check the fecundity of the female immigrant, while the practice of preventing conception or producing abortion is unfortunately widely prevalent. Single women too frequently refrain from settling down finally with one man till they have been for some time on the garden, and it is an ascertained fact that there is seldom any offspring from temporary and irregular unions. The largest number of births undoubtedly occur amongst coolies who have taken up land and built houses outside the garden, but these are not reported by the manager, form

No. 51, Part II, only referring to the children of mothers living within the lines. The Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar, makes the following remarks :

The general birth-rate of this district last year was higher than that of any other district in the province, and this year's figures show a considerable advance on those of 1896. I have again to report that I can find no cause for doubting the general accuracy of the statistics furnished by employers in regard to birth-rate. A birth may here and there accidentally escape registration, but I believe that the figures recorded practically correspond with the actual state of things.

The distribution of birth-rate according to nationality in the Sibsagar district lends support to the Deputy Commissioner's opinion. The birth-rate amongst coolies from Behar and Bengal Proper was 118·4 and 108·9, respectively, amongst coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh it was 42·6, and among Central Provinces coolies it was 43·3. In the case of the two former classes of coolies the rate is sufficiently high to warrant the assumption that it is fairly correct, and it is obviously improbable that the births of one class of coolies would be correctly registered and those of another omitted. At the same time the very low-recorded death-rate among children, to which reference will be made further on, continues to cast doubt on the accuracy of the registration of vital occurrences, and the Chief Commissioner finds it impossible to resist the conclusion that in many cases where children die shortly after birth, both birth and death escape registration.

Death-rate for the year.

56. The statistics of mortality for the year and for each half-year separately are given in the table below, with the corresponding figures of the previous year :

District.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children.						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half-year.		Second half-year.		Total.		First half-year.		Second half-year.			
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	1,653	2,237	1,867	3,224	3,520	5,461	14·3	17·8	15·5	25·4	29·8	43·2
Sylhet ...	2,025	2,649	2,255	3,695	4,280	6,344	15·6	18·2	16·3	25·2	32·0	43·4
Kamrup ...	84	77	69	69	153	146	22·4	19·5	18·0	17·3	40·4	36·8
Darrang ...	944	1,108	850	1,132	1,794	2,240	15·0	15·8	12·9	15·5	27·9	31·3
Nowgong ...	495	535	433	518	928	1,053	26·1	25·6	21·9	23·6	48·0	49·2
Sibsagar ...	2,002	2,686	1,769	2,922	3,771	5,608	16 1	19·7	13·7	20 3	29·8	40·0
Lakhimpur ...	1,944	2,218	1,882	3,050	3,826	5,268	18·5	18·9	17·3	24 2	35·8	43·1
Total	9,147	11,510	9,125	14,610	18,272	26,120	16·4	18·6	15·6	22·8	32·0	41·4

The death-rate was deplorably high and higher than it has been for any year since 1892. But this result was to be expected, for the year was a most exceptionally unhealthy one, and the recorded death-rate for the whole province was 50·61 per mille, or nearly 10 per mille more than the death-rate amongst the immigrant population. It must be borne in mind also that the tea gardens of Assam assumed the position of great relief works to which coolies came up from the famine districts in unprecedented numbers with their constitutions enfeebled by want and their power of resisting disease seriously impaired. Under ordinary circumstances, the climate of this* province is unfavourable to immigrants during the first year or two of their residence in the country, and considering that the year was extraordinarily unhealthy even for Assam, that the number of unacclimatised coolies in the province was abnormally large, and that the condition in which a large number of these coolies arrived was far from satisfactory, the Chief Commissioner is of opinion that the death-rate, although high, was considerably lower than might have reasonably been anticipated

57. The following table shows the mortality among both Act and non-Act adult labourers during each of the past two years:

Death-rate amongst adults.

District.	Actual strength of total adult population of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.					
			Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	74,386	80,255	349	474	1,931	2,544	2,280	4,018	57·3	80·0	18·4	41·3	30·6	50·0
Sylhet	81,461	88,504	521	737	2,543	3,766	3,064	4,493	43·5	58·3	36·8	49·9	37·5	50·7
Kamrup	2,647	2,748	48	43	76	61	124	104	87·0	73·0	36·3	28·3	46·8	37·8
Darrang	44,681	48,111	1,305	1,630	533	247	1,838	1,877	45·8	55·3	18·7	13·2	34·9	39·0
Nowgong	13,190	14,714	379	449	297	314	676	763	63·1	59·8	39·7	43·5	50·8	51·8
Sibsagar	77,859	85,911	1,700	2,489	985	1,408	2,685	3,897	47·9	56·1	25·6	33·7	34·4	45·3
Lakhimpur	77,703	81,758	1,795	2,547	1,098	1,583	2,893	3,930	44·4	54·8	33·9	38·9	39·7	47·9
Total	366,450	402,205	5,998	8,369	7,362	10,723	13,360	19,082	45·7	56·9	30·8	41·9	36·1	47·4

There was an increase in the mortality of both Act and non-Act coolies, the causes of which have been explained in the preceding paragraph. The highest death-rate for Act coolies was recorded in Cachar and Kamrup; in neither case, however, was the number of deaths recorded large, while in the district of Cachar a special cause was in operation in the shape of very virulent fever in an epidemic form. The number of deaths from all causes among the total population in this district was 61·18 per mille, or just double the mortality of 1896.

58. The following table shows the recorded causes of death among Act coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death among Act labourers

District.		Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1897.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ...	1897 ...	5,578	85	14	125	175	32	25	18	474	86·0
	1896 ...	*6,504*	*112*	...	*100*	*35*	*91*	...	*11*	*349*	*53·3*
Sylhet ...	1897 ...	13,114	140	58	160	54	41	69	205	727	55·3
	1896 ...	*11,953*	*68*	*51*	*137*	*52*	*19*	*11*	*183*	*521*	*43·5*
Kamrup ...	1897 ...	596	5	...	7	13	7	4	7	43	72·0
	1896 ...	*552*	*6*	*1*	*3*	*3*	*25*	*3*	*7*	*48*	*87·0*
Darrang ...	1897 ...	29,407	265	147	403	90	189	223	313	1,630	55·3
	1896 ...	*26,354*	*173*	*86*	*263*	*74*	*199*	*246*	*165*	*1,206*	*45·8*
Nowgong ...	1897 ...	7,508	29	13	80	134	40	7	146	449	59·8
	1896 ...	*5,821*	*25*	*15*	*81*	*115*	*40*	*10*	*93*	*379*	*65·1*
Sibsagar ...	1897 ...	44,193	434	148	716	122	218	329	522	2,489	56·1
	1896 ...	*39,564*	*243*	*122*	*287*	*78*	*139*	*254*	*572*	*1,700*	*42·9*
Lakhimpur ...	1897 ...	46,428	267	253	684	191	360	102	690	2,547	54·6
	1896 ...	*40,341*	*226*	*130*	*388*	*158*	*144*	*123*	*626*	*1,795*	*44·4*
Total ...	1897 ...	146,824	1,225	633	2,175	779	887	759	1,901	8,359	56·7
	1896 ...	*131,089*	*858*	*405*	*1,259*	*515*	*657*	*647*	*1,657*	*5,998*	*45·7*
	1895 ...	*121,812*	*1,107*	*471*	*1,424*	*620*	*789*	*424*	*1,481*	*6,316*	*52·8*

There was an increase under every head, which was most marked in the case of bowel diseases, and more especially dysentery. These diseases and anæmia, which

also claimed a large number of victims, are especially prevalent amongst new coolies, and the figures contained in this table tend to confirm what has been stated above that the high death-rate of the year was to a large extent due to the importation of coolies weakened by famine.

59. The following table shows the recorded causes of death amongst non-Act adult coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death among non-Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of non-Act coolies employed in 1897.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *anchylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ...	1897 ...	74,676	521	275	768	800	578	322	280	3,544	47·3
	1896 ...	*67,883*	*300*	....	*515*	*406*	*200*	*123*	*387*	*1,931*	*28·4*
Sylhet ...	1897 ...	75,389	264	334	827	570	447	255	1,069	3,766	49·9
	1896 ...	*69,508*	*295*	*246*	*637*	*325*	*132*	*141*	*767*	*2,543*	*36·5*
Kamrup ...	1897 ...	2,151	16	....	7	30	3	2	3	61	28·3
	1896 ...	*2,096*	*14*	*3*	*8*	*10*	*25*	*4*	*12*	*76*	*36·3*
Darrang ...	1897 ...	18,704	40	28	47	21	31	24	56	247	13·2
	1896 ...	*17,727*	*65*	*29*	*40*	*27*	*59*	*29*	*83*	*332*	*18·7*
Nowgong ...	1897 ...	7,206	6	9	50	173	10	7	59	314	43·5
	1896 ...	*7,470*	*22*	*10*	*25*	*130*	*16*	*10*	*84*	*297*	*39·7*
Sibsagar ...	1897 ...	41,718	273	92	336	100	92	138	377	1,408	33·7
	1896 ...	*38,326*	*123*	*68*	*174*	*74*	*48*	*99*	*399*	*985*	*25·6*
Lakhimpur ...	1897 ...	35,529	146	126	322	133	136	134	386	1,383	38·9
	1896 ...	*32,363*	*101*	*81*	*218*	*98*	*51*	*95*	*454*	*1,098*	*33·9*
Total ...	1897 ...	255,373	1,266	864	2,357	1,827	1,297	882	2,230	10,723	41·9
	1896 ...	*235,373*	*920*	*437*	*1,617*	*1,070*	*531*	*501*	*2,186*	*7,262*	*30·8*
	1895 ...	*212,486*	*884*	*706*	*1,470*	*1,074*	*347*	*450*	*1,695*	*6,626*	*31·2*

The diseases which proved especially deadly to Act labourers were no less fatal to their non-Act fellows. There was also a large increase in the mortality from malarial fever, especially in Cachar.

60. The following table shows the causes of death and the death-rate among children (*i.e.*, from birth to sixteen years of age) during each of the past two years:

Death-rate amongst children.

District.	Mean strength of children in 1897.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Total of 1896.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.	
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *anchylosto-miasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.			1897.	1896.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	45,939	275	125	345	265	128	235	70	1,443	1,240	31·3	28·5
Sylhet	57,300	105	139	485	481	143	40	458	1,851	1,216	32·2	23·3
Kamrup	1,211	4	1	3	19	2	...	13	42	29	34·7	25·4
Darrang	23,424	55	51	68	29	37	46	77	363	295	15·5	12·6
Nowgong	6,682	10	7	84	113	10	11	55	290	252	43·4	41·7
Sibsagar	53,843	178	93	520	306	76	84	454	1,911	1,086	35·7	22·3
Lakhimpur	39,501	67	87	389	236	83	103	373	1,338	933	33·5	27·5
Total of 1897	227,900	694	503	1,894	1,449	479	519	1,500	7,038	5,012	30·8	24·3
„ „ *1896*	204,950	487	325	1,281	930	243	274	1,472	5,012	4,398	...	...

Although the recorded death-rate among children shows a considerable advance, yet, in view of the great increase in the general death-rate during the year, the Chief Commissioner doubts whether there has been any actual improvement in the registration of infant mortality. In the report on immigration for 1893, it was pointed out that no death-rate can be accepted as correctly representing the mortality among children under 16 on tea gardens which falls below 35 per 1,000, and it is probable that during the year 1897, the actual rate considerably exceeded this estimate. It is evident that employers still fail to realize the necessity of furnishing accurate returns of deaths among the non-working members of their labour force.

61. The following statement illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies distributed according to nationality:

Mortality according to country of origin.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Deaths among adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.	
		1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bengal — Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	158,633	170,013	2,892	3,656	34·9	41·0
	Women ...			2,659	3,342		
Bengal — Behar ...	Men ...	26,074	27,398	450	527	33·8	35·9
	Women ...			430	457		
Bengal — Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	68,846	71,029	871	1,133	25·3	34·2
	Women ...			877	1,304		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Men ...	67,208	72,374	1,643	2,657	45·9	70·2
	Women ...			1,455	2,431		
Central Provinces ...	Men ...	18,180	35,617	895	1,660	84·1	83·0
	Women ...			588	1,309		
Madras	Men ...	9,347	9,909	152	238	30·1	43·9
	Women ...			131	199		
Assam	Men ...	17,560	15,369	130	91	11·5	11·0
	Women ...			75	58		
Total	Men ...	192,272	208,011	7,045	9,972	36·6	47·9
	Women ...	174,188	194,192	6,215	9,110	35·6	46·9
Grand total ...	...	366,460	402,203	13,260	19,082	36·1	47·4

N.B.—The deaths among coolies from Bombay (1 female) and Nepal (10 males and 9 females) are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is too small to strike a percentage on.

As in the preceding year, the highest death-rates occurred among coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and the Central Provinces. There was a great increase of mortality among the former class, which included many new immigrants from famine-stricken areas, and the same cause, as anticipated in last year's report, kept up the death-rate of Central Provinces coolies, which, however, shows a slight decrease, as compared with the preceding year.

Proportion of unhealthy gardens.

62. The following statement shows the number and proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district during the last two years. Gardens are classed as unhealthy on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., and the number of deaths from which the average is struck is not less than 10:

District.	Total number of gardens.		Number of unhealthy gardens.		Percentage of unhealthy gardens.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	189	189	4	29	2·1	15·3
Sylhet	134*	137*	5	19	3·7	13·8
Kamrup	30	31	1	1	3·3	3·2
Darrang	88	90	6	16	6·8	17·7
Nowgong	54	40	10	7	18·5	17·5
Sibsagar	168	173	9	23	5·3	13·2
Lakhimpur	142	149	11	24	7·7	16·1
Total	805	809	46	119	5·7	14·7

* Exclusive of one garden, which did not submit returns Nos. 50 and 51.

Previous to 1889, only those gardens were placed on the unhealthy list which were unhealthy in respect of the total population. For the purpose of comparison, the following table is added showing the number of unhealthy gardens in each district during the years 1882 to 1897, *i.e.*, since Act I of 1882 came into force, classified according to the method in force before 1889:

District.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Cachar ...	3	5	9	1	10	7	7	12	1	5	8	3	2	...	2	10
Sylhet ...	...	14	15	18	13	5	4	10	1	3	3	...	...	...	...	5
Kamrup ...	2	2	3	3	...	...	2	1	6	4	5	1	1	1	...	...
Darrang ...	14	14	14	9	8	10	12	10	2	5	12	...	...	3	2	4
Nowgong ...	16	14	16	3	4	2	2	6	2	3	5	5	7	...	1	...
Sibsagar ...	7	11	25	5	15	10	21	18	11	6	14	1	6	2	...	5
Lakhimpur ...	15	13	11	3	14	15	17	12	5	4	8	4	5	5	5	15
Total ...	57*	73†	93‡	42§	64	49	65	69	28	30	55	14	21	11	10	39

* Of these, 13 gardens had less than 10 deaths on each.
† This includes two camps, to which coolies recruited by a Local Board were located.
‡ The number of deaths on three gardens was less than 10.
§ The number of deaths on two gardens was less than 10.

There was a very large increase in the number of unhealthy gardens in every district, except Nowgong. The causes of this excessive mortality have already been discussed in paragraph 56 above, where it was shown to be due (1) to the abnormally large number of new coolies who came to the province; (2) to the enfeebled condition in which many of them arrived; and (3) to the exceptionally unhealthy character of the year which produced a phenomenally high death-rate amongst the general population. The accuracy of this explanation is confirmed by the very large number of cases in which the Civil Surgeon, when inspecting an estate, was unable to attribute the excessive mortality which had occurred to any defect either in its physical surroundings or sanitary arrangements. The mortality was due to special causes, which are no longer in operation, and the Chief Commissioner has every reason to believe that the number of gardens unhealthy in 1898 will approximate more closely to the figures for 1895 or 1896 than to those of the past year. At the same time it must not be forgotten that even in this abnormally unhealthy year, the number of gardens unhealthy on their total population was smaller than in any of the eight years ending 1889, and was considerably smaller than in 1892.

63. In accordance with the rules framed by the Chief Commissioner, all gardens which are classed as unhealthy for any year are inspected as soon as possible after the close of the year by the Civil Surgeon or Civil Medical Officer in charge of the district. In the following paragraphs a detailed account is given of the gardens which were unhealthy in each district, of the causes of mortality and of the action taken by

the Chief Commissioner in each case. It must be remembered that in the Surma Valley a very large number of the unhealthy gardens are worked entirely by non-Act labour, or contain so small a number of Act I coolies, that their contracts could be cancelled without inconvenience, and that the Chief Commissioner's power of control is accordingly limited. The question is one which has never come under full discussion, but it may certainly be presumed that when next the labour law of the province comes under revision, the proposal will be made to invest Government with the same power of control over the sanitary conditions of coolies not under agreement that it at present enjoys in the case of labourers who have executed contracts under Act I of 1882.

It should be understood that the figures given in the statements which follow refer only to that portion of the labour force of each garden in respect of which the garden is unhealthy. The death-rate for the year (column 5) is the sum of the death-rates for each half-year taken separately and calculated on the mean labour force of the half-year.

64. *CACHAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Khoril ...	108	10	92·5	2	1	3	...	...	3	1
	2. Arcuttipur ...	169	13	76·5	3	...	3	...	...	...	7
	3. Seetipur ...	70	10	142·8	3	...	1	1	...	4	1
	4. Utrunabund ...	115	11	95·6	1	2	4	2	...	...	2
	5. Busthal ...	133	21	159·5	1	4	6	...	...	9	1
	6. Ratanpur ...	70	30	450·5	...	...	15	2	10	...	3
	7. Jhaffirband ...	121	30	247·1	2	2	6	5	...	...	15
	8. Lakhinagar ...	273	32	117·2	2	2	5	2	...	...	21
	9. Chandipur ...	53	20	188·6	...	4	...	...	2	...	4
	Total (Act) ...	1,112	167	148·8	14	15	43	12	12	16	55
Non-Act population	10. Bagbahar ...	321	28	87·2	3	...	3	6	4	3	9
	11. Rosekandi ...	2,625	248	92·3	29	10	73	28	84	6	18
	12. Dwarbund ...	712	113	158·9	20	14	43	10	6	2	18
	13. Katal ...	2,104	160	76·4	12	14	64	16	31	2	21
	14. Chandowa ...	437	36	82·1	...	...	12	13	...	...	11
	15. Derby ...	2,919	294	103·7	23	32	68	48	95	14	13
	16. Natwanpur ...	444	31	70·4	21	2	6	11	...	...	1
	17. Jadrogram ...	563	65	117·3	38	1	13	6	2	...	5
	18. Badarpur ...	536	85	153·05	12	7	30	19	...	...	17
	19. Hassiura ...	1,733	158	91·1	8	11	47	3	69	...	20
	Total (non-Act) ...	12,414	1,218	98·1	156	91	359	160	291	27	134
Act and non-Act population taken together	20. Hatichera ...	1,068	87	81·7	4	26	20	22	...	3	12
	21. Badlicherra ...	275	22	80·1	15	3	...	2	...	1	1
	22. Baladhan ...	303	34	113·0	5	3	5	12	1	6	2
	23. Narainpur ...	584	44	75·2	11	9	11	3	...	10	...
	24. Chengur ...	468	36	77·3	11	...	14	2	1	5	3
	25. Paloi ...	479	36	74·1	2	8	11	9	2	3	1
	26. Subong	588	86	146·1	13	14	6	34	...	7	12
	27. Jitarmukh ...	593	62	87·5	14	12	7	1	7	...	21
	28. Bandukmara ...	1,555	141	90·6	11	10	66	23	1	...	30
	29. Ainakhal ...	2,177	173	79·4	26	3	57	9	13	...	65
	Total (Act and non-Act)...	8,090	721	89·1	112	88	197	117	28	35	147

(1) *Khoril.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. The Civil Surgeon repor s that the high death-rate in 1897 was due to an outbreak of cholera in an epidemic form, and not to any defect in the sanitary arrangements of the estate. The water-supply, however, is not of a satisfactory character, and the Civil Surgeon has been directed to make recommendations for its improvement.

(2) *Arcutlipur.*—This garden was unhealthy for the first time since 1893 in consequence of an epidemic of cholera: The same action was taken as in the case of Khoril.

(3) *Scotlpur.*—This garden had not been unhealthy since 1894. The sanitary arrangements appear to be satisfactory. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly accepted the Civil Surgeon's view that no action is at present necessary.

(4) *Urrunabund.*—The garden was unhealthy on Act I coolies only, of whom only 115 were employed on the estate. The death-rate amongst its large staff of non-Act labourers was only 2·5 per cent. The Deputy Commissioner has been directed to see that the water-supply is improved and the hospital accommodation increased.

(5) *Burthal.*—This garden also was only unhealthy on the Act I labourers who form an insignificant fraction of the total population. The death-rate amongst non-Act coolies was 2·47 per cent. The sanitary arrangements are reported to be good, and the wages paid to coolies above the average; but as the garden was unhealthy in 1894 and 1895, the Chief Commissioner has decided that if the half-yearly returns for 1898 show no improvement in regard to mortality, a committee will be held to determine whether the garden should not be entirely closed to Act I labourers.

(6) *Ratanpur.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1893, 1895 and 1896, as well as in 1897, and its circumstances were carefully considered last year in connection with the high death-rate in 1896. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 22nd December 1897 under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, and on his recommendation, the Chief Commissioner, under section 132 of the Act, declared the estate to be unfit for the residence of labourers from the North-Western Provinces. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 8th March 1898. No special action was considered necessary beyond urging the manager to complete the improvements in the water-supply recommended by the Civil Surgeon. At the time of this inspection there were no Act I coolies on the estate.

(7) *Jhaffirband.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1894, but healthy in 1895 and 1896. The unhealthiness in 1897 was due to the particularly unhealthy season, and all that seemed necessary was to take steps to improve the water-supply, and to ensure that the Act I coolies received higher wages.

(8) *Lakhinagar.*—The deaths in 1897 were distributed under a large number of different causes, which confirms the Civil Surgeon's statement that the high death-rate was due to the general unhealthiness of the year, and not to any specific defect on the garden; but as the garden was unhealthy in 1893 and 1895, as well as in 1897, the Chief Commissioner has decided that a committee shall be held if it proves unhealthy on the results of the first half-year of 1898. The Deputy Commissioner has also been requested to enquire into the causes of the very low average rate of the wages paid to Act labourers, with a view to taking action, if necessary, under section 117 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

(9) *Chandipur.*—The garden was unhealthy for the first time in 1897, and only on the small body of Act I labourers employed. The sanitary arrangements are satisfactory, but the wages earned by Act labourers are low, and the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to enquire into the matter.

(10) *Bagbahar.*—The garden was unhealthy for the first time in 1897. The sanitary arrangements are good, and no action at present seems called for. No Act I coolies are employed on this estate.

(11) *Rosekandi.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1894 and 1895, as well as in 1897. A committee was held on it in 1895, at which the unhealthiness was attributed to the importation of coolies of inferior physique. The high death-rate on this garden during the year 1897 seems to have been due to the unhealthy character of the year, rather than to any defects in the management of the garden, and no special action was considered to be necessary. Less than 4 per cent. of the coolies employed on this garden had executed contracts under Act I of 1882.

(12) *Dwarbund and* (13) *Katal.*—These gardens bear a good record, and the high death-rate in 1897 was due to the unhealthy character of the year. The sanitary arrangements are reported satisfactory, and the gardens are entirely worked by non-Act coolies. No special action seemed called for.

(14) *Chandowa.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1896, and was closed to importation from the North-Western Provinces. The Chief Commissioner has deferred taking further action pending the receipt of a special inspection report under section 130 of Act I of 1882. The garden is a small one, and on the date of the Civil Surgeon's last inspection only employed 18 Act I coolies.

(15) *Derby and* (16) *Natwanpur.*—These gardens are entirely worked by non-Act labour, and had not been unhealthy for many years. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to see that certain improvements were made in the water-supply and the hospital arrangements of the Derby tea estate.

(18) *Budarpur.*—The garden was last unhealthy in 1891. The high death-rate in 1897 seems to have been due to the unhealthy character of the year, rather than to any specific defects in the sanitary arrangements. Very few Act I coolies are employed, and of these only one died. The Civil Surgeon did not consider that any special action was called for, and his finding was accepted by the Chief Commissioner.

(19) *Hassiura or Lalamukh.*—The garden was last unhealthy in 1893. The inspection report submitted by the Civil Surgeon was not satisfactory, and contained certain discrepancies, which have been pointed out to the Deputy Commissioner, and he has been requested to have the garden inspected under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act. It appears that in February 1898, less than one per cent. of the labour force were under contract under Act I of 1882.

(20) *Haticherra.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years, and the Civil Surgeon reports that the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory. The water-supply, however, is entirely obtained from *kutcha* wells—an unsatisfactory arrangement for a garden with a population of 2,000 souls. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to ask the manager to take steps to improve the supply.

(17) *Indrogram,* (21) *Badlicherra,* (22) *Baladhan,* (23) *Narainpur,* (26) *Subong, and* (28) *Bandukmara.*—These gardens are usually healthy, and the high death-rate in 1897 seems to have been due to the unhealthy character of the year, rather than to any defects in the sanitary arrangements. No special action was therefore considered necessary.

(24) *Chengur.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1894, but healthy in 1895 and 1896. The high death-rate in 1897 was due to an epidemic of cholera. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to see that the water-supply, which appeared to be inadequate, was improved.

(25) *Paloi.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1895 and in 1896, when it was closed to Act labourers, who had been less than one year in the province, with the result that the mortality amongst Act coolies, which in the two preceding years had been very high, was less than 7 per cent. in 1897. The Civil Surgeon reported that the recommendations made by him had been carried out, and that the death-rate of the garden, 7·4 per cent., was due to the unhealthiness of the season. No further action was considered necessary.

(27) *Jitarmukh.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. The water-supply is, however, reported to be unsatisfactory, and the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to see that it is improved, and to enquire into the cause of the lowness of the wages paid to Act coolies, with a view to taking action, if necessary, under section 117 of the Act.

(29) *Ainakhal.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1889, 1890, 1893, 1895, and 1896, when, by an order of the Chief Commissioner under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, it was declared unfit for the residence of all classes of Act labourers. The garden was again unhealthy on non-Act population during the past year. The Civil Surgeon reports that effect is being given to all his recommendations, and nothing further can be done.

65. *SYLHET*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or anasarca.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Malnicherra ...	83	14	196·3	7	1	...	2	...	2	2
	2. Kanihati ...	291	23	79·5	...	1	5	1	3	...	13
	3. Schindurkhan ...	437	36	82·2	11	...	2	...	...	4	19
	4. Tipperacherra ...	438	39	88·1	17	4	1	1	...	1	15
	5. Chandpur ...	156	16	82·1	3	1	6	1	3	...	2
	Total (Act) ...	1,445	128	88·5	38	7	14	5	6	7	51
Non-Act population ...	6. Kewacherra ...	443	39	87·6	13	6	6	11	...	2	1
	7. Bhagicherra ...	886	101	116·3	...	13	32	14	5	...	37
	8. Uttarbhag ...	208	19	98·1	2	3	4	9	...	...	1
	9. Rajki ...	274	28	116·4	1	6	3	15	1	...	2
	10. Adamtila ...	1,100	137	124·5	7	13	53	28	5	...	31
	11. Champabari ...	9 3	198	202·5	...	43	91	10	39	...	15
	12. Bhubirghat ...	1,114	136	122·9	3	12	54	38	9	...	20
	13. Bhitarband ...	772	77	99·8	10	2	23	9	12	...	21
	14. Piplagul ...	1,151	121	108·1	4	1	28	10	38	...	40
	15 Salgoi ...	1,583	117	71·6	...	15	47	19	17	...	19
	16. Putni ...	1,933	160	84·6	3	11	44	67	30	...	5
	17. Shabazpur ...	280	48	173·1	6	...	25	13	1	...	3
	18. Langai ...	929	105	114·7	...	5	43	38	4	...	15
	19. Chandicherra ...	960	73	75·7	...	3	10	8	2	10	40
	Total (non-Act) ...	12,588	1,259	107·5	49	133	463	289	163	12	250
Act and non-Act population taken together... ...	*Nil.*										

(2) *Kanihati.*—This garden had never been unhealthy before, and no special action was considered necessary beyond seeing that effect was given to the Civil Surgeon's suggestions for the improvement of the water-supply.

(3) *Schindurkhan.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1895, but healthy in 1896. The high death-rate during the year 1897 was attributed by the Civil Surgeon to the existence of a dirty stream near the lines. The Civil Surgeon's recommendations for the improvement of this defect have been brought to the manager's notice, and the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to submit a report on the action taken.

(4) *Tipperacherra.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1894, but healthy in 1895 and 1896. From the Civil Surgeon's inspection report it appears that the high death-rate of this garden during the year 1897 was entirely due to an outbreak of cholera; and as the manager had already taken steps to improve the water-supply, no further action was considered necessary.

(5) *Chandpur.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1894, but healthy in 1895 and 1896. The only action considered necessary was to ensure that effect was given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations for the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the garden. The manager was also warned not to import weakly coolies from the Central and North-West Provinces.

(7) *Bhagicherra.*—This garden, which was also unhealthy on the non-Act population in 1896, is now entirely worked by non-Act labour. The manager has been warned that if matters do not improve, the unhealthiness of the garden will be considered to justify coolies in declining to fulfil contracts executed under Act XIII of 1859, or section 492 of the Indian Penal Code. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to report when effect has been given to the Civil Surgeon's suggestions for the improvement of the water-supply and for the construction of a hospital.

(9) *Rajki.*—This garden was opened in 1896, and came on the unhealthy list in 1897 owing to the heavy death-rate amongst non-Act coolies. From the Civil Surgeon's inspection report it appears that the mortality occurred chiefly among coolies from the North-Western Provinces, and the manager has been requested to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, and to desist from importing coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh until the sanitary condition of the garden improves.

(10) *Adamtila.*—The Civil Surgeon attributes the high death-rate of 1897 to the importation of coolies from the North-Western Provinces. No special action was considered necessary beyond seeing that effect was given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendation for the improvement of the water-supply and that the importation of coolies from the North-Western Provinces was discontinued. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to have this garden inspected again by the Civil Surgeon; there are, however, no Act I coolies on the estate.

(11) *Champabari.*—This garden was opened in 1896, when the death-rate was 16·9 per cent., and in 1897 the death-rate was 20·2 per cent. No Act labourers are employed on the estate, and the high death-rate seems to have been chiefly due to the employment of sickly coolies from the North-Western Provinces. The managing agents were addressed by the Chief Commissioner and requested to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's suggestions. They were also warned that as long as the garden remains unhealthy, the fact of its unhealthiness will be taken into consideration as a justification for the breach of any labour agreements by which the coolies employed on it may be bound under Act XIII of 1859 or other laws, as it is impossible for Government to compel coolies by a penal sanction to remain upon an estate where they run such grave risk of forfeiting their lives. The Chief Commissioner is glad to hear that the health of this garden has improved, and that the death-rate during the current year will probably be less than seven per centum.

(12) *Bhubirghat.*—This garden is entirely worked by non-Act labour. It has been unhealthy continuously since 1893, and the death-rate during these years has been deplorably high, but it appears that the recommendations of the Civil Surgeon made at his previous inspections have been carried out. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to report to what extent effect is being given to the suggestions made by the Civil Surgeon at his last inspection.

(14) *Piplagul.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1894 and 1895, but healthy in 1896. There are no Act I coolies on the estate. The water-supply is unsatisfactory, and the manager has been requested to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's suggestions for its improvement and for the erection of a hospital, and has been cautioned against the importation of North-Western Provinces coolies.

(16) *Putni.*—This garden had never been unhealthy before, and the high death-rate during 1897 appears to have been entirely due to the unhealthy character of the year. The only action considered necessary was to see that the Civil Surgeon's suggestions for the improvement of the water-supply were given effect to by the manager.

(17) *Shabaspur.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden, which is entirely worked by non-Act labour. The manager was requested to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's suggestions.

(18) *Langai.*—This garden was unhealthy for the first time in 1897. The only serious defect seems to be the water-supply, and the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to report what action is being taken on the Civil Surgeon's recommendations for its improvement.

(19) *Chandicherra.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden, and was only brought on the unhealthy list in 1897 in consequence of the excessive mortality among children. The Deputy Commissioner has been asked to see that effect is given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations for the improvement of the water-supply, and that his suggestions for reducing the rate of infant mortality are brought to the notice of the manager.

The Civil Surgeon's inspection reports on the remaining five unhealthy gardens had not been received at the time when this report was sent to Press, and the action taken by the Chief Commissioner with regard to them will, therefore, be recorded in the report for the year 1898.

66. *KAMRUP—*

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	*Kalá-ázár.*	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	*Nil.*										
Non-Act population	Barduar ...	320	24	74·9	4	1	3	5	4	...	7
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

Barduar.—The garden had not been unhealthy since 1892, and the high death-rate last year was due to the heavy mortality amongst children. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the view of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that no special action is necessary beyond asking the manager of the garden to do all that he can to induce the non-Act coolies to adopt the precautions to prevent the spread of *kalá-ázár* recommended by Dr. Rogers.

67. *DARRANG—*

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Dysentery.	Diarrhœa.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, or cachexia supervening.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	1. Hanchara	325	25	76·9	2	14	...	...	1	4	4
	2. Dotupadong	963	74	75·2	9	14	4	2	35	7	3
	3. Sadharughop... ...	423	30	70·9	...	5	4	1	7	8	5
	4. Mosai	430	34	79·0	1	20	...	5	2	6	...
	5. Rangaghar	262	28	106·8	16	4	2	2	2	...	2
	6. Singlijan	273	33	120·8	13	4	3	...	1	7	5
	7. Kolony	503	35	69·5	1	6	6	3	20	6	3
	8. Belsiri	251	31	123·5	...	21	3	3	1	1	2
Act-population	9. Thakurbari	541	40	73·9	11	11	1	9	4	5	6
	10. Thekrajuli	173	13	75·1	...	7	...	...	1	1	4
	11. Kunderbil	349	27	77·3	2	6	1	2	3	5	8
	12. Khatrabari	344	21	86·0	3	13	1	1	...	1	3
	13. Rupital	214	30	140·2	16	7	...	5	...	...	2
	14. Majbat	73	17	232·8	...	13	3	...	...	1	1
	15. Bongong	135	11	81·4	4	4	...	1	...	...	2
	Total (Act)	5,179	449	86·7	77	149	37	37	87	52	50
Non-Act population ...	*Nil.*								6		
Act and non-Act population taken together.	16. Tokenkota	71	13	184·9	6	...	...	4	...	...	2

(1) *Hanchara.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1893, 1894 and 1895, as well as in 1897. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly directed, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden shall be closed to future importations under the Act.

(2) *Dolupadong.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1890, 1892 and 1893. The high death-rate in 1897 seems to have been due to the importation of bad classes of coolies more than to any defect in the physical conditions of the estate, and the Chief Commissioner has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of new coolies from the Central Provinces and Orissa. It appeared that the average wages earned by coolies on this garden were unduly low, and the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to institute a careful enquiry into the matter.

(3) *Sadkarughop.*—This garden had last been unhealthy in 1894, and the high death-rate in 1897 seems to have been entirely due to misdirected economy. Bad classes of coolies were imported, who earned very low wages, with the natural result that numbers of them fell sick and died. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to enquire into the matter, and to warn the manager of the garden that he should at once discontinue the importation of any but coolies of good physique, and that if the garden is unhealthy in 1898, it will in all probability be entirely closed to Act labour.

(4) *Monai.*—This garden is usually healthy. The high death-rate in 1897 was entirely due to the importation of famine-stricken coolies. No special action was considered necessary beyond warning the manager of the garden against importing coolies who are physically unfit to labour.

(5) *Rangaghur.*—The garden had never been unhealthy before. It appeared on the unhealthy list for 1897 in consequence of a bad outbreak of cholera. The arrangements on this garden are adequate, and the wages earned by the coolies are good, and no special action was considered necessary.

(6) *Singlijan, and* (9) *Thakurbari.*—Thakurbari had never before been unhealthy, and Singlijan only once in 1885, and all the sanitary arrangements on these gardens are satisfactory. The high death-rate in 1897 in Singlijan was apparently entirely due to imported cholera, and no special action was considered necessary.

(7) *Kolony.*—The sanitary arrangements on this garden are good, the wages earned by the coolies fair, and the high death-rate in 1897 appears to have been due to the importation of unsuitable labour. A warning conveyed to the management was considered sufficient in this case.

(8) *Belsiri.*—The unhealthiness of this garden in 1897, when the death-rate on Act coolies was 12·3 and on non-Act 10·6 per cent., was in part due to the importation of unsuitable coolies, for which the management must be held responsible, and the Chief Commissioner has accordingly declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of new coolies from the Central Provinces, North-Western Provinces and Ganjam, and has directed that it shall be closed to all future importations of such classes of labourers under Act I of 1882. The general arrangements of the garden are reported by the Civil Surgeon to be good.

(10) *Thekrajuli.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The high death-rate in 1897 was due to the transfer of weakly coolies from another estate. The sanitary arrangements seem excellent, and the coolies earn good wages, so no special action was called for.

(11) *Kunderbil.*—The garden had been healthy since 1894. The high death-rate in 1897 appears to have been due to importations of weakly coolies; the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory, and the coolies earn good wages. The Chief Commissioner has therefore accepted the suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, to defer taking further action till the results of mortality for 1898 are known.

(12) *Khairabari.*—This is a new garden, which was unhealthy in 1896 as well as in 1897. The Civil Surgeon reports that all the sanitary arrangements on it are excellent. The estate has been closed to coolies from the North-Western Provinces.

(13) *Rupital.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1892 and 1895. The high death-rate in 1897 was due to an epidemic of cholera; but as it appears that *kalá-ázár* is breaking out on the estate, the Chief Commissioner has, in accordance with the suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of new Act labourers, and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of labourers under Act I of 1882.

(14) *Majbat.*—The garden had previously been healthy, and the high death-rate in 1896 was due to imported cholera, and in 1897 to dysentery brought on by exposure after the earthquake of the 12th June 1897. The arrangements on the garden are good, and the wages earned by the coolies satisfactory, so no special action was considered necessary.

(15) *Bongong.*—This is an old garden, which is usually healthy. There does not seem to have been any special reason for the high death-rate in 1897 except the general unhealthiness of the year. No special action was considered necessary.

(16) *Tokonkota.*—The garden is a very small one, with an average population of under 150 souls. It is usually healthy, and no special action seemed called for.

The Diplonga garden, which was unhealthy in 1896, was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act in December 1897. The garden was healthy in 1897, and the Chief Commissioner decided to await the results of 1898 before taking further action.

68. *NOWGONG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	*Kalá-ázár.*	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ancylostomiasis.*	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Owguri ...	36	10	284·3	...	6	...	...	3	...	1
	2. Nelli ...	131	14	108·1	2	3	...	...	4	1	4
	3. Kulikusi ...	60	14	222·1	2	3	...	...	4	1	4
	4. Barpani ...	238	23	95·9	...	2	7	5	1	...	8
	Total (Act) ...	465	61	131·0	4	14	7	5	12	2	17
Non-Act population	5. Rengberg ...	226	41	180·7	...	36	1	2	...	...	2
	6. Sakunbari ...	537	42	78·3	...	29	1	2	1	1	8
	7. Sagmutia ...	258	27	211·8	1	...	15	1	4	2	4
	Total (non-Act) ...	1,021	110	107·8	1	65	17	5	5	3	14
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*										

(1) *Owguri.*—This is a small garden with a population of less than 100 souls. The high rate of mortality was due to *kalá-ázár*, and the sanitary conditions of the garden were reported by the Civil Surgeon to be satisfactory. No action was considered necessary beyond warning the manager that if the garden continued to be unhealthy, it would be closed to Act labour.

(2) *Nelli.*—This garden has only twice been unhealthy in 1891 and 1896. The mortality was principally due to *kalá-ázár*, but as the Civil Surgeon reported that the disease had diminished and that the health of the garden was likely to improve, the Chief Commissioner decided to take no further action for the present. The manager of the garden was, however, warned that if it appeared again on the unhealthy list in 1898, it would probably be necessary to close it to Act labour.

(3) *Kulikusi.*—Owing to repeated unhealthiness this garden was closed last year to all North-Western Provinces and Oudh labourers, and as there are now only 21 Act I coolies on the garden, and there have been no deaths among Act coolies since the last inspection in December 1897, no action was taken beyond closing the garden to the importation of Act I labourers till it has been provided with a proper water-supply.

(4) *Barpani.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1895, but healthy in 1896. From the Civil Surgeon's inspection report it appeared that the sanitation of the estate had been neglected in previous years. Greater attention, however, is now being paid to the sanitary needs and general welfare of the coolies, and the Chief Commissioner has therefore accepted the proposal made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, to await the result of the improvements recommended by the Civil Surgeon before taking further action. Much of the mortality on this estate appears to have been due to the importation of unsuitable coolies, and the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, has been requested to warn the agents of the garden, who are responsible for this,

that a continued high death-rate due to this cause will render the garden liable to be closed to Act labour.

(5) *Rengbeng.*—This is a small non-Act garden, worked by Cachari, Garo, and Lalung labourers. The Civil Surgeon reports that the high death-rate is entirely due to *kalá-ázár*, and that there has been no neglect on the part of the manager. No special action was considered necessary.

(6) *Sakunbari.*—This garden has not been unhealthy since 1893, and was only unhealthy in 1897 on its non-Act population. The high death-rate was chiefly due to *kalá-ázár*, and not to any want of care on the part of the management, and no special action was considered necessary.

(7) *Sagmutia.*—This garden has been continuously unhealthy since 1893. A committee was accordingly held on the 28th October 1897, and recorded an unanimous finding which, under section 129 of the Act, the Chief Commissioner is bound to accept that the heavy death-rate of the garden was in no way due to any physical defect of the estate, or of any part of it. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 11th March 1898, and he reported that the health of the garden had improved.

The following action was taken in 1897 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1896:

Udmari.—The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act on the 22nd December 1897. The mortality had decreased considerably, and the state of the garden, as disclosed in the Civil Surgeon's report, was fairly satisfactory. No action was considered necessary.

Diju Valley.—The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act on the 16th December 1897. The state of the garden had improved; no action was considered necessary.

69. *SIBSAGAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, et cachexia or splenic diseases.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Sapakati	133	13	98·0	...	...	11	...	...	...	2
	2. Jaboka	1,374	138	100·5	27	...	69	3	14	17	10
	3. Khamtai	467	33	72·6	8	...	20	...	2	16	3
	4. Kathalguri	371	24	74·5	10	...	4	...	...	...	10
	5. Hilika	707	71	90·1	23	2	31	3	6	4	9
	6. Dholi	274	18	104·7	...	2	10	...	...	2	4
	7. Mohima	264	19	115·3	...	1	12	3	1	...	3
	8. Rangajan	748	83	84·7	1	2	4	...	1	2	3
	9. Duffating	405	42	101·5	16	...	20	1	...	0	9
	10. Barhola	148	15	96·1	1	3	4	...	2	2	3
	11. Cattirg	208	21	101·5	...	...	5	...	...	5	1
	12. Nilsamara	223	23	105·3	12	1	3	1	1	3	2
	13. Ghiladhari	129	13	109·0	4	...	...	...	3	1	5
	14. Badlipar	323	33	125·5	3	...	13	...	...	3	5
	Total (Act)	4,701	455	98·4	89	11	254	12	30	61	69
Non-Act population ...	15. Tawkak	655	86	129·3	4	5	55	...	1	4	17
	16. Lukwah	653	49	75·3	2	1	26	...	3	8	8
	17. Gabrupurbat	423	44	104·6	...	...	14	10	3	7	7
	18. Khanikar	166	20	120·0	11	1	3	...	...	3	3
	Total (non-Act)	1,891	197	104·8	17	8	108	10	6	16	34
Act and non-Act population taken together.	19. Nagarijan	949	95	100·3	28	2	7	5	5	22	16
	20. Dhilingapar	819	66	80·9	29	5	6	...	...	3	23
	21. Kallapani	550	87	159·6	21	5	38	4	...	1	18
	22. Salalpani	355	47	132·4	3	...	30	...	...	...	6
	23. Naga Dholi	702	109	155·3	47	1	31	7	...	1	3
	Total (Act and non-Act) ...	9,465	404	116·9	236	13	143	26	8	25	68

The great demand for medical officers caused by the military operations on the North-West frontier rendered it impossible to depute an European medical officer to the Sibsagar district during the first seven months of 1898, and detailed reports have consequently not been received with regard to the 23 unhealthy gardens in that district. The action taken with respect to these gardens will be noticed in the report for the year 1898.

70. *LAKHIMPUR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of estate.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ankylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Dighultarang ...	347	33	96·4	4	4	15	...	...	...	10
	2. Longsoal	1,071	101	94·7	...	42	8	...	22	...	29
	3. Namrup	263	53	200·6	12	...	27	5	...	...	9
	4. Hukanpukri ...	265	23	87·2	3	2	7	4	...	1	6
	5. Kehang	352	34	96·1	2	1	12	4	7	...	8
	6. Tamulbari	90	11	125·4	3	...	3	1	...	...	4
	7. Dikombari	575	41	71·6	5	9	2	4	...	...	21
	8. Bolai	87	14	156·0	...	4	5	1	2	...	2
	9. Khamptigoali ...	161	15	96·9	...	3	...	...	...	1	11
	10. Dekajuli	131	21	163·2	7	...	7	2	...	...	5
	11. Hapjan Parbat ...	130	15	118·5	7	2	6	...	...	...	...
	12. Jaipur	450	40	88·3	...	6	19	3	2	...	10
	13. Nahorkutia ...	200	16	82·3	6	...	6	...	1	...	3
	14. Hugrijan	464	39	84·9	9	...	2	6	11	...	11
	15. Dijoo	1,184	129	107·4	25	2	55	7	16	11	13
	Total (Act) ...	5,770	585	101·4	83	75	174	37	61	13	142
Non-Act population	16. Titadimaru	95	12	125·2	...	...	1	2	...	...	9
	17. Khonikar	667	47	70·6	4	5	13	11	...	2	12
	18. Dinjan	665	64	93·6	4	1	27	6	3	10	13
	19. Pobajan	215	22	93·8	...	4	4	4	3	1	6
	20. Samdang	783	70	88·5	2	9	13	26	12	...	8
	21. Khobang	906	68	74·7	...	9	19	10	3	...	27
	22. Tikak	622	54	86·6	...	13	27	1	...	2	11
	23. Kodom	340	29	80·2	4	3	10	...	5	5	2
	24. Pathalipam	740	52	70·1	...	4	20	3	...	9	16
	Total (non-Act) ...	5,033	418	83·0	14	48	134	63	26	29	104
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(2) *Longsoal.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1896. The high death-rate in 1897 seems to have been due to the importation of a large number of unsuitable coolies

in 1895, and to the neglect of proper precautions after their arrival. Certain defects were found in the water-supply and drainage, and instructions have been issued for their removal. The Chief Commissioner has also accepted the suggestion made by the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, and declared the garden unfit for the residence of new coolies from the North-Western Provinces, and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of such coolies under the Act. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has been requested to warn the manager that the mortality results of the current year will decide whether his garden shall or shall not be closed to all classes of labour, except the best classes of Chota Nagpur coolies.

(3) *Namrup.*—This is a new garden, which was unhealthy for the first time in 1897, the high death-rate being partially accounted for by an outbreak of cholera which appeared among a batch of new coolies. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the suggestion made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that another chance should be given to the garden, the management at the same time being distinctly warned that if it is again unhealthy in 1898, it will be closed to Act labour.

(5) *Kehang.*—The garden had been healthy since 1893. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the view of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that no special action is called for beyond seeing that effect is given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

(6) *Tamulbari.*—This is a small garden, and had not been unhealthy since 1894. From the second inspection report of the garden, dated the 29th June 1898, it appears that the manager is carrying out the recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon in his inspection report of the 21st April 1898. The Chief Commissioner has therefore accepted the proposal of the Deputy Commissioner that further time should be allowed for the completion of these improvements. In view of the Inspector's remarks that the daily task is unreasonably heavy, the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to consider the propriety of taking action under section 117 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

(7) *Dikombari.*—This is usually a healthy and well-managed garden. The Chief Commissioner does not consider it necessary at present to close it to any class of labourers, but the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to see that the Civil Surgeon's recommendations regarding the improvement of the lines and the water-supply are carried out.

(8) *Bolai.*—The Civil Surgeon's inspection report discloses that the sanitary arrangements of this garden are capable of considerable improvement; but as it is usually healthy, the Chief Commissioner has refrained from closing it at once to Act labour, and has asked the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts to warn the manager that if steps have not been taken to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations before the next inspection, and if the death-rate is high in 1898, there will be no hesitation in depriving the garden of the advantage of the Act.

(10) *Dekajuli.*—This is a new garden. The unhealthiness was due partly to new clearances and partly to the introduction of cholera by a new batch of coolies. The Chief Commissioner has deferred taking further action pending the receipt of a second report by the Civil Surgeon, but he is unfavourably impressed by the heavy mortality which has occurred on the garden, and considers that a strict inspection is called for.

(11) *Hapjan Parbat.*—The garden is ordinarily healthy, and though it was on the unhealthy list for 1897, the results of the first twelve weeks of 1898 (only one death) show that it is likely to be healthy this year. The Chief Commissioner therefore agrees with the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that no special action is necessary beyond seeing that effect is given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

(12) *Jaipur.*—The garden had not been unhealthy since 1889, and the high death-rate in 1897 appears to have been due to a large extent to deaths among coolies who had come up from the famine districts in a weakly state of health. All the arrangements are reported to be good, and no further action is at present called for.

(13) *Nahorkutia.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1896. The wages, water-supply, and hospital arrangements are good, and the manager is doing his best to improve the health of his coolies. The Chief Commissioner has accordingly accepted the suggestion made by the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur to await the results of the year 1898 before taking further action.

(14) *Hugrijan.*—This garden is usually healthy, and the Chief Commissioner agrees with the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that it is unnecessary to close it to any kind of labour, provided that the manager carries out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations and re-introduces some system approved by the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur for the dieting of weakly coolies.

(16) *Titadimaru.*—This garden had been healthy since 1893, and only came on the unhealthy list for 1897 in consequence of the mortality amongst children. All the arrangements appear to be satisfactory, and the only action necessary was to ensure that the Civil Surgeon's recommendations were carried out.

(17) *Khonikar.*—This garden had been healthy since 1893. It was only unhealthy on non-Act population in 1897, and appears to be well managed. No special action was considered necessary.

(19) *Pobajan.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and the Chief Commissioner has accepted the Commissioner's view that no action is necessary.

(20) *Samdang.*—The Deputy Commissioner reports that this garden is a model one, and that it is seldom on the unhealthy list. The Chief Commissioner considered that no special action was called for.

(21) *Khobang.*—This is usually a healthy garden. It appears that all the arrangements on it are good, with the exception of the water-supply, which is now being improved.

(22) *Tikak.*—Owing to repeated unhealthiness, this coal-mine was closed to all Act labour in 1896, and there are now no Act I labourers. The Chief Commissioner has satisfied himself by more than one inspection that the Assam Railways and Trading Company are doing all in their power to reduce the mortality.

The following action was taken in 1897 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1896:

Hatiali.—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, on the 26th December 1897, and his suggestions were brought to the notice of the manager.

Dikhari and Naharani.—These gardens were inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, on the 21st December 1897. No special action was called for.

Rungagora.—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, on the 19th December 1897. The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, was requested to invite the manager's attention to the fact that the labour force was insufficient, and to see that certain recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon were carried out.

The Civil Surgeon's inspection notes on seven unhealthy gardens in this district had not been received at the time when this report was sent to Press. The action taken with respect to these gardens will be noticed in the report for 1898.

General remarks on unhealthy gardens.

71. In the above remarks, the fullest prominence has been given to the statistics of mortality from unhealthy gardens; but the Chief Commissioner deems it right to enter a caution against drawing inferences from figures which are too one-sided to admit of forming any general conclusion. If there were some gardens with a deplorably high death-rate, there were others with an exceptionally low one. It is from the general average that the administration must be judged. It must also be borne in mind that the occurrence of a high death-rate during one, or even two, years is no reason in itself for assuming a garden to be badly managed, or unfit for the residence of coolies. The past year was the unhealthiest ever known in Assam, and the general death-rate exceeded that of any other province in India, except the famine-stricken Central Provinces. The Chief Commissioner has, therefore, dealt comparatively leniently with unhealthy gardens. Where the high mortality has extended over several years, or the management has failed to show that all possible steps have been taken to maintain the health of the coolies, there stringent measures have been adopted; but where the mortality is not due to any serious defect in the sanitary arrangements, the garden has been gently treated. Mr. Cotton has no hesitation in saying that in the great majority of new gardens which have been brought on the black list during the year, the managers concerned have devoted their best attention to keeping their gardens healthy and to complying with the recommendations of the Government Inspectors.

It is true that in only three cases has the Chief Commissioner directed that gardens should be wholly closed to Act labour. In passing such orders he has not been neglectful of an important consideration which is perhaps not always remembered. The extension of Government protection to the labourer is the essential complement of a penal labour law, and the Assam Labour and Emigration Act empowers Government to insist on measures being carried out for the well-being of the coolies in those gardens where the labourers, or some of them, are under a penal contract under the Act. But the provisions of the Act do not extend to gardens on which free labour only is employed. The consequence is that when a garden is closed to Act labour, Government loses its power of control, and the free coolies who thenceforth work the garden are deprived of the benefits which result from the inspection by Government officers, and the enforcement of the improvements found by them to be necessary. It is, therefore, far better in the interests of the labourers themselves that the extreme measure of closing a garden to Act labour should be deferred as long as possible, and should only be adopted when all efforts at improving the healthiness of a garden by insisting on the construction of good houses on healthy, well-drained sites, the provision of pure water, and proper medical attendance etc., have failed, or when the employer has neglected to carry out the improvements indicated to them by inspecting officers. It may be added that, although in many gardens the proportion of Act coolies is small, the whole labour force benefits by the measures taken under the Act in the interests of the small minority of coolies working under its provisions.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPECTION.

72. The number of gardens borne on the inspection register at the end of the year was 852, against 848 at the end of 1896. There was an increase in every district, except Cachar, where the number remained the same as in the previous year, and Nowgong, where 14 small gardens, which submitted no returns, were struck off the register.

Number of gardens submitting returns and liable to inspection.

Seven hundred and sixty-two gardens submitted returns, which are compulsory in the case of estates employing Act coolies, or more than 50 other persons. Seven hundred and fifty-one gardens were included in this category, and returns were received from 11 other gardens.

73. The following statement shows the number of gardens classified, district by district, according to the classes of labourers employed, the number which submitted returns, and the number which were inspected during the year:

Classification of gardens according to the coolies employed, and inspection of Act and non-Act gardens.

	Cachar.					Sylhet.					Kamrup.					Darrang.			
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.		
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number of gardens ...	104	83	2	42	231	77	58	3	...	138	8	8	2	13	31	80	5	2	3	90
,, sending returns 50 and 51.	104	83	2	...	189	77	58	2	...	137	8	8	1	...	17	80	5	2	...	87
,, inspected once ...	99	83	2	...	184	74	58	1	...	133	5	7	1	...	13	64	5	...	...	69
,, ,, twice ...	4	...	...	...	4	3	...	...	...	3*	3	1	...	...	4	6	...	...	..	6
,, ,, thrice ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total number inspected in 1897.	104	83	2	...	189	77	58	1	...	136	8	8	1	...	17	70	5	...	...	75
,, ,, ,, in 1896.	94	90	...	...	184	79	52	...	...	131	8	4	...	...	12	79	5	...	...	84

	Nowgong.					Sibsagar.					Lakhimpur.					Total.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.			
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
Number of gardens ...	30	9	1	...	40	140	17	2	14	173	125	7	1	16	149	364	187	13	88	852
,, sending returns 50 and 51.	30	9	1	...	40	140	17	2	...	159	125	7	1	...	133	364	187	11	...	762
,, inspected once ...	21	8	...	...	29	124	17	...	...	141	84	7	1	...	92	471	185	5	...	661
,, ,, twice ...	9	1	...	...	10	10	...	...	...	10	39	...	...	...	39	74	2	...	...	76
,, ,, thrice ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
Total number inspected in 1897.	30	9	...	...	39	135	17	...	...	152	123	7	1	...	131	547	187	5	...	739
,, ,, ,, in 1896.	32	8	...	...	40	131	17	...	...	148	117	8	...	...	125	549	184	...	...	124

* One garden was visited a second time for verification of contracts only.

More than half the gardens in the Surma Valley were entirely worked by non-Act labour, but in Assam Proper there were only 46 gardens of any size which did not employ Act I labourers, while 383 estates were entirely or partially worked by coolies under the Act.

Inspection.

74. Of the 751 gardens liable to inspection, 734 were inspected during the year. The 17 gardens remaining uninspected were distributed as follows:—Lakhimpur 2, Sibsagar 5, and Darrang 10. The Deputy Commissioner of the last-named district explains that certain gardens there were left uninspected owing to the floods after the earthquake of June 12th, which rendered them inaccessible. This explanation cannot, however, be accepted by the Chief Commissioner, as the gardens must have been accessible some months before the close of the year.

Gardens inspected twice or oftener.

75. The total number of gardens inspected twice or oftener was 78, as compared with 72 in 1896. Of these gardens, only 46 were on the unhealthy list, and therefore required by rule to be twice inspected, and the result is, therefore, much more satisfactory than that of the previous year, when only 72 second inspections were made, there being 70 unhealthy gardens. The burden of inspection work is extremely heavy—in Cachar 184 gardens were inspected, in Sylhet 136, in Sibsagar 152, and in Lakhimpur 131—and the Chief Commissioner considers that it has been done in a satisfactory manner by the district staff.

76. The following table shows the number of gardens inspected respectively by Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Civil Surgeons, and other inspecting agency:

District.	Deputy Commissioners.		Assistant Commissioners.		Civil Surgeons.		Other inspecting agency.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	71	75	38	81	30	4	45	29
Sylhet	7	8	98†	103	18	6	13†	22
Kamrup	7	8	...	4	5	5	...	...
Darrang	27	31	26	15	47	6	7	23
Nowgong	10	9	...	...	38	40	6	...
Sibsagar	26	32	91	109	38	15	2	8
Lakhimpur	19*	33*	43	37‡	33	46§	56‖	54¶
Total	167	196	296	349	209	122	129	136

* This includes two joint inspections by the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon.

† Revised figures.

‡ This includes 7 inspections for verification of contracts and examination of vital statistics.

§ Ditto 15 ditto ditto and other purposes.

‖ Ditto 26 ditto ditto ditto.

¶ Ditto 7 ditto ditto.

There was a large decrease in the number of inspections made by Civil Surgeons owing to the small number of gardens on the unhealthy list for the preceding year, and an increase in the number made by all other classes of officers.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING OF THE SYSTEM GENERALLY.

77. The relations between employers and labourers continued to be generally satisfactory. Petty cases of unlawful assembly and rioting by coolies occur from time to time on tea gardens—the result usually of some real or fancied grievance against the management. There were as many as fourteen cases of this kind in the Darrang district, but it does not appear that they had any special significance, and the offenders were adequately punished with short terms of imprisonment.

Relations between employers and labourers.

The only important riot took place at the Laskarpur garden in Sylhet, where an aggravated assault with hoes was committed by a number of coolies on the manager, who had given three strokes with a stick to one of the coolies in punishment for assaulting a sardar. Of the offenders, one was sentenced to nine months', two to six months', and two to three months' rigorous imprisonment.

78. No cases of friction between villagers and coolies were reported during the year. The attitude of the Assamese raiyat towards the imported coolie is, however, well brought out by Mr. Duncan, Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur :

Relations between the garden population and the villagers.

"The garden population generally live on very friendly terms with the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, and there was no serious friction or quarrel between the garden people and the villagers in this district during the year. The Assamese villagers complain of the gradual taking up of waste land in their neighbourhood by tea planters. They will not take it up themselves, but they use it for grazing purposes and draw their fuel-supply from it. The near approach of tea to their villages also restricts the custom of allowing their cattle to roam at will in the neighbourhood. They do not consider the money which the garden brings into the neighbourhood, and of which they can always secure a large share. They are sufficiently well off for all their requirements, and can afford to neglect such prospective gains. They, therefore, invariably object to the granting of waste lands to planters. Due weight is always given to their objections, but it often happens that they are of the most trivial nature. In any case, once the land is given, things settle down immediately, and they live on the most amicable relations with their new neighbours."

79. The circumstances of the year were calculated to emphasize the fact that, in spite of all drawbacks, the condition of the immigrant labourers on tea estates in Assam is far preferable to what it would have been if they had remained in their native districts. During the years 1896 and 1897, many thousands of human beings have, through the instrumentality of the tea industry, been rescued from actual destitution, and afforded a favourable opportunity of making a fresh start in life.

General condition of labourers.

80. There was a further increase in the proportion of labour strength to cultivation of tea, and the average number of adult coolies per 100 acres of tea is now nearly double what it was sixteen years ago, as will be seen from the following statement :

Year.	Area under tea cultivation.	Total adult labour force (annual mean), Act and non-Act.	Number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea.	Year.	Area under tea cultivation.	Total adult labour force (annual mean), Act and non-Act.	Number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea.
	Acres.				Acres.		
1882 ...	178,851	131,405	73	1890 ...	231,038	250,113	108
1883 ...	189,453	153,739	81	1891 ...	241,823	265,315	109
1884 ...	189,852	177,622	93	1892 ...	247,192	283,819	114
1885 ...	197,510	188,262	95	1893 ...	254,126	302,558	119
1886 ...	203,993	192,076	94	1894 ...	268,796	310,767	115
1887 ...	211,079	203,023	96	1895 ...	276,014	334,298	121
1888 ...	216,676	219,861	101	1896 ...	291,909	366,460	125
1889 ...	227,249	241,297	106	1897 ...	310,550	402,205	129

Planters, as a rule, are well aware that a strong labour force ensures the health and contentment of their coolies, as well as thoroughness of cultivation, and they have profited by the facility of recruitment during the past two years to secure this advantage.

Settlement of time-expired labourers on the land.

81. The following table shows the area of Government land taken up by time-expired coolies during the past two years, and also in 1880, 1885, and 1890:

District.	Area settled direct with time-expired coolies in				
	1880.	1885.	1890.	1896.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cachar	1,467	423	7,133	11,356	11,748
Sylhet	*	83	300	229	246
Kamrup	56	14	42	155	211
Darrang	1,254	3,063	7,454	14,347	16,327
Nowgong	77	520	1,895	4,193	5,891
Sibsagar	990	1,856	10,639	16,275	17,763
Lakhimpur	740	2,237	4,897	11,612	15,737
Total	4,584	8,196	32,360	58,167	67,923

* Information not available.

There was a large increase over the figures for 1896, especially in the district of Lakhimpur, and the settled area has more than doubled in the past seven years. These figures do not, however, adequately represent the actual area of land held by immigrants. In the Assam Valley many coolies rent land from the gardens on which they are employed, or from Assamese raiyats, while the area of the land rented from the zamindars of Sylhet and the mirasdars of Cachar, which is excluded from this statement, amounts to many thousand acres.

Time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.

82. The following statement gives details of time-expired garden coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in the several districts of the province:

District.	Number of time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.	Nature of disease.							Number of days treated.	Average period of detention, in days.
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Other causes.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	655	...	82	106	171	174	122	655	2,276	3·4
Sylhet	325	9	58	69	55	28	106	325	4,553	14·0
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	53	...	4	7	11	9	22	53	1,819	34·3
Nowgong	34	...	...	4	4	7	19	34	1,114	32·7
Sibsagar	158	4	22	26	28	15	63	158	2,092	13·2
Lakhimpur	75	...	5	9	15	25	21	75	1,340	17·8
Total of 1897	1,300	13	171	221	284	258	353	1,300	13,194	10·1
,, ,, 1896	746	9	113	123	108	88	305	746	16,613	22·2

There was a large increase in the number of persons treated, for which the district of Cachar was mainly responsible, and which was due to the exceptionally unhealthy character of the year.

Sick and destitute coolies.

83. The attention of the Chief Commissioner was drawn by a letter from the Government of India, No. 2523—84-2, dated the 22nd December 1896, forwarding copy of a letter from the Government of Bengal, to the fact that considerable numbers of sick and destitute men, women and children had been noticed in the Tippera district of Bengal travelling on foot from the direction of Assam, and that it had been found necessary to take measures for the relief of these people, some of whom stated that they had been imported by contractors for work on the Assam-Bengal Railway, while others alleged that they were formerly employed on tea-gardens in the Surma Valley, which they were compelled to leave on becoming unfit for work owing to illness. From other sources complaints reached the Chief Commissioner with regard to the number of infirm and helpless *ex*-tea-garden coolies who were to be found eking out a subsistence by begging in the villages and bazars of the Sylhet district. Careful enquiries were instituted, the result of which showed that the problem for solution was one of great difficulty. It was found that in the majority of cases the coolies belonged to a class notoriously addicted to throwing up employment without adequate cause; they were seldom under any contract which provided for their repatriation; and, as they frequently left their work in debt to their employers, they were reluctant to apply to a Magistrate for assistance. The Chief Commissioner, after giving the matter his most careful consideration, issued orders in accordance with which shelter-huts have been provided at places selected by the Deputy Commissioners in the interior of the Sylhet and Cachar districts, and along the line of march to Bengal, for the accommodation of able-bodied vagrant coolies, and separate houses have been constructed at charitable dispensaries, where, in the opinion of the Deputy Commissioners, this is necessary for the accommodation of destitute coolies who require medical treatment. In the case of sick and destitute *ex*-tea-garden coolies, and those who, though not incapable of work, are actually helpless, such as women with children, the Magistrate, on receipt of a report from the Hospital Assistant or the Police, as the case may be, arranges for their return to the garden where they were previously employed, or, if they desire it, for repatriation to their homes. It was decided that the expenditure incurred in the treatment of vagrant and destitute garden coolies, and for their repatriation, when necessary, should be met from the Inland Labour Transport Fund.

The Chief Commissioner at the same time took the opportunity of impressing upon the employers of labour the responsibility which rested upon them of co-operating with the officers of Government in grappling with this difficulty. Mr. Cotton has observed for himself the consideration and humanity displayed by the great majority of employers towards coolies who have worn themselves out in the service of the garden. It is impossible to visit an estate without noticing the number of infirm persons who are supported practically by the charity of their employers, but there still may be, and no doubt are, a few employers short-sighted and unkind enough to turn such persons out of their gardens. The Chief Commissioner accordingly appealed to all leading planters and local associations to discountenance any such practice wherever it might exist to the utmost of their power, as one that struck at the very heart of the penal labour system. The above orders are tentative merely, and if it is found by experience that they do not adequately deal with the evil, further action will be taken.

During the year under report, feeding centres for vagrant coolies were established in the Sylhet district at Sylhet, Habiganj, Jagadispur, and Karimganj, and shelter-huts at Bholaganj, Fenchuganj, Kamalganj, Motiganj, and Nilams' Bazar. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar reports that 149 persons were relieved at Silchar, but that they declined, as a rule, to return to the gardens from which they had come, or take work of any kind, and preferred to make a living by begging in the station. The system has, however, not as yet been at work long enough to enable its effects to be fairly judged.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

84. The statement below shows the receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1897-98:

Receipts.				Expenditure.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Medical	...	...	...	Salaries of depot establishment (including native doctors, hospital assistants, compounders, overseers, clerks and menials, etc.)	11,750 12 8	2,117 3 5	13,868 0 1
Contractors' license fees under section 13	2,528 4 0	300 0 0	2,928 4 0				
Recruiters' license fees under section 34	...	224 0 0	224 0 0	Supplies and services (including diet of patients, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, expenses during the prevalence of epidemic, petty construction and repairs)	23,890 5 5	790 14 3	24,600 3 8
Registration fees under sections 35 and 64	...	20,928 0 0	20,928 0 0				
Fees for license of inland steamers and native boats under section 98	...	1,614 0 0	1,614 0 0	Contingent charges ...	5,133 7 1	838 14 3	5,972 5 4
Rates under section 109 ...	72,594 0 0	...	72,594 0 0	Grants to dispensaries ...	4,715 0 0	...	4,715 0 0
Fees for use of debarkation depôt	8,390 9 7	...	8,390 9 7	Inspectors, embarkation agents, and other officers	4,715 15 6	15,369 9 5	20,085 8 11
Fees for labour contracts under sections 112 and 113 ...	13,061 0 0	...	13,061 0 0	Clerks and servants ...	9,515 14 6	6,623 10 10	16,139 9 4
Medical examination fees ...	218 0 0	...	218 0 0	Travelling allowance, etc.	7,396 10 5	1,691 0 5	9,087 10 10
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	2,617 7 1	...	2,617 7 1	Miscellaneous (including rents, percentage of treasury and audit establishment, refund, pensions)...	5,319 4 5	3,565 6 9	8,884 11 0
Fines and miscellaneous ...	651 10 8	33 0 0	684 10 8				
Diet, etc., charges recovered ...	5,924 0 0	...	5,924 0 0	Repatriation charges ...	534 12 3	...	534 12 3
Miscellaneous—				Fees for inspecting tea gardens	3,768 0 0	...	3,768 0 0
Sale of old stores and materials	0 0 6	...	0 0 6	Permanent advance ...	...	20 0 0	20 0 0
Cash recovery	...	122 1 1	122 1 1	Deficiency (excess of payments over receipts of the Inland Labour Transport Funds)	7,112 10 3	—7,112 10 3	...
				Permanent advance ...	...	...	...
Total	1,07,052 13 10	23,223 1 1	1,30,276 0 11	Total	84,843 12 4	23,223 1 1	1,08,066 13 5

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. J. MONAHAN,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Shillong,

The 5th September 1898.

STATEMENT.

Return showing the Statistics of the Labour Force of the

Classes of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of the year.	Additions Imported. By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contracts under section 111.	Number giving contracts under section 112.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	5,910 / 72,435 / 44,365	824 / ... / ...	722 / ... / ...	... / 6,071 / 3,940	27 / ... / ...	120 / ... / ...
Total	122,750	824	722	10,011	27	120
Sylhet ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	12,196 / 73,300 / 55,928	1,167 / ... / ...	1,320 / ... / ...	... / 9,507 / 5,428	4,386 / ... / ...	1,807 / ... / ...
Total	140,424	1,167	1,320	14,935	4,386	1,807
Surma Valley ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	18,106 / 145,675 / 99,393	1,991 / ... / ...	2,042 / ... / ...	... / 16,428 / 8,468	4,413 / ... / ...	1,927 / ... / ...
Total	263,174	1,991	2,042	24,946	4,413	1,927
Kamrup ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	554 / 2,051 / 1,125	86 / ... / ...	121 / ... / ...	... / 70 / 143	1 / ... / ...	25 / ... / ...
Total	3,730	86	121	213	1	25
Darrang ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	27,479 / 17,078 / 20,928	2,201 / ... / ...	4,826 / ... / ...	... / 1,093 / 4,344	3,669 / ... / ...	1,681 / ... / ...
Total	65,485	2,201	4,826	5,437	3,669	1,681
Nowgong ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	6,426 / 6,634 / 6,177	1,365 / ... / ...	1,680 / ... / ...	... / 826 / 1,449	378 / ... / ...	178 / ... / ...
Total	19,237	1,365	1,680	2,275	378	178
Sibsagar ... ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	41,874 / 37,163 / 49,965	4,231 / ... / ...	7,120 / ... / ...	... / 3,476 / 8,898	2,570 / ... / ...	6,297 / ... / ...
Total	129,002	4,231	7,120	10,374	2,570	6,297
Lakhimpur ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	41,231 / 32,523 / 34,497	8,253 / ... / ...	6,701 / ... / ...	... / 3,768 / 8,301	4,034 / ... / ...	4,615 / ... / ...
Total	108,251	8,253	6,701	12,069	4,034	4,615
Brahmaputra Valley ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	117,564 / 95,449 / 112,692	16,136 / ... / ...	20,448 / ... / ...	... / 9,233 / 21,135	10,852 / ... / ...	12,796 / ... / ...
Total	325,705	16,136	20,448	30,368	10,852	12,796
Total for the Province ... { Act I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	135,670 / 241,124 / 212,085	18,127 / ... / ...	22,490 / ... / ...	... / 23,711 / 29,603	15,265 / ... / ...	14,723 / ... / ...
Grand total	588,879	18,127	22,490	55,314	15,265	14,723

Tea Gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1897.

made during the year 1897.							Deductions made during the year 1897.			
Otherwise than by importation.									Deaths.	
Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contracts.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.	Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	First half-year.	Second half-year.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
12	12	...	...	...	...	1,717	7,627	73	...	180	294
892	...	1,515	3,847	...	1,370	14,595	82,070	605	3,628	1,313	2,231
275	...	...	912	2,989	...	7,216	51,581	164	865	744	699
1,179	12	1,515	4,759	2,989	1,370	23,528	141,278	842	4,493	2,237	3,224
221	34	...	...	...	...	8,035	21,131	237	...	347	385
1,882	...	4,838	5,030	...	1,112	22,301	95,901	1,124	4,935	1,442	2,324
748	...	...	1,173	3,481	...	10,830	65,856	466	1,833	865	986
2,851	34	4,838	6,203	3,481	1,112	42,134	182,888	1,827	6,768	2,649	3,695
233	46	...	...	...	...	10,662	28,758	310	...	522	679
2,774	...	6,353	8,827	...	2,482	36,914	182,439	1,729	8,863	2,755	4,555
1,023	...	...	2,085	6,470	...	18,046	117,439	630	2,698	1,609	1,685
4,030	46	6,353	10,962	6,470	2,482	65,622	328,836	2,669	11,561	4,886	6,919
...	2	...	...	...	...	235	789	...	...	22	21
19	...	100	611	...	28	828	2,879	...	466	35	26
7	...	...	70	133	...	353	1,478	...	109	20	22
26	2	100	681	133	28	1,416	5,146	...	575	77	69
431	54	...	...	...	...	12,862	40,341	431	...	733	877
127	...	6,393	2,912	...	379	11,104	28,182	127	5,019	123	122
172	...	...	293	1,339	...	6,168	27,096	172	1,656	230	133
730	54	6,393	3,205	1,339	379	30,134	95,619	730	6,675	1,108	1,132
436	6	...	...	...	...	4,243	10,669	446	...	222	227
213	...	837	1,480	...	207	3,363	10,197	215	2,051	156	158
153	...	...	62	368	...	2,032	8,209	143	545	157	133
802	6	837	1,542	368	207	9,838	29,075	804	2,596	535	518
940	139	...	...	...	...	21,297	63,171	940	...	1,130	1,359
677	...	8,596	3,921	...	1,450	18,120	55,283	671	4,915	734	674
438	...	...	588	3,496	...	11,420	61,385	437	1,478	822	889
2,055	139	8,596	4,509	3,496	1,450	50,837	179,839	2,048	6,393	2,686	2,922
271	224	...	...	...	...	24,098	65,329	319	...	1,039	1,508
541	...	10,773	2,469	...	1,039	18,590	51,113	367	5,252	700	683
142	...	...	460	3,220	...	12,123	46,620	173	1,897	479	859
954	224	10,773	2,929	3,220	1,039	54,811	163,062	859	7,149	2,218	3,050
2,078	425	...	...	...	...	62,735	180,209	2,136	...	3,166	3,992
1,577	...	26,699	11,393	...	3,303	82,208	247,854	1,386	17,793	1,759	1,663
912	...	...	1,473	8,576	...	32,096	144,788	925	5,685	1,708	2,036
4,567	425	26,699	12,866	8,576	3,303	147,036	472,741	4,441	23,388	6,624	7,691
2,311	471	...	...	...	...	73,387	209,157	2,446	...	3,688	4,671
4,351	...	33,052	20,270	...	5,785	89,169	330,293	3,109	26,266	4,503	6,318
1,935	...	...	3,358	15,046	...	50,142	262,227	1,555	8,383	3,317	3,721
8,597	471	33,052	23,828	15,046	5,785	212,698	801,577	7,110	34,649	11,510	14,610

Return showing the Statistics of the Labour Force of the Tea Gardens

Classes of labourers.		Deductions made during: Desertions. First half-year.	Desertions. Second half-year.	By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under section 111.	Number giving agreements under section 112.	Cancelment under section 11A.	Cancelment under sections 111A, 111B, 139, 140, 140A, or 177.
		19		20	21	22	23	24
Cachar	Act I labourers (adults)	406	218	...	...	...	31	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	2,845	2,331	...	7	129	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	644	830	1,370	...	...	...	...
Total		3,895	3,379	1,370	7	126	31	...
Sylhet	Act I labourers (adults)	638	678	...	...	...	4	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	4,007	3,663	...	3,554	1,193	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	1,655	1,558	1,112	...	...	...	...
Total		6,360	5,899	1,112	3,554	1,193	4	...
Surma Valley	Act I labourers (adults)	1,044	806	...	...	...	35	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	6,012	5,914	...	3,561	1,322	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	2,499	2,388	2,482	...	...	...	...
Total		10,255	9,278	2,482	3,561	1,322	35	...
Kamrup	Act I labourers (adults)	14	20	...	...	...	...	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	227	123	...	1	25	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	30	61	28	...	...	...	...
Total		271	204	28	1	25	...	...
Darrang	Act I labourers (adults)	510	580	...	...	...	...	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	445	212	...	2,749	1,243	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	223	68	579	...	...	...	...
Total		1,178	860	579	2,749	1,243	...	...
Nowgong	Act I labourers (adults)	248	268	...	...	...	3	19
	Non-Act labourers adults	452	199	...	337	81	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	158	125	207	...	...	...	...
Total		858	592	207	337	81	3	19
Sibsagar	Act I labourers (adults)	712	588	...	...	...	19	...
	Non-Act labourers adults	569	785	...	2,205	3,115	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	207	496	1,450	...	...	...	...
Total		1,488	1,869	1,450	2,205	3,115	19	...
Lakhimpor	Act I labourers (adults)	724	828	...	...	...	13	1
	Non-Act labourers adults	598	817	...	3,334	3,201	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	221	351	1,039	...	...	...	...
Total		1,543	1,996	1,039	3,334	3,201	13	1
Brahmaputra Valley	Act I labourers (adults)	2,208	2,284	...	...	...	35	20
	Non-Act labourers adults	2,286	2,046	...	8,626	7,665	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	845	1,101	3,303	...	...	...	...
Total		5,339	5,431	3,303	8,626	7,665	35	20
Total for the Province	Act I labourers (adults)	3,282	3,189	...	...	...	70	20
	Non-Act labourers adults	9,198	8,240	...	12,187	8,967	...	...
	Non-Act labourers children	3,144	3,089	5,785	...	...	...	...
Grand total		15,594	14,709	5,785	12,187	8,967	70	20

in the Province of Assam during the year 1897—continued.

the year 1897—*contd.*									Annual strength.		
Cancelment for permanent unfitness under section 122.	Cancelment under section 129.	Suspended under section 130.	Efflux of time, section 141.	Redemption, section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1897.	Strength on 1st July 1897.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Death-rate per mille.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		35
28	51	...	1,355	15	49	2,700	4,927	5,739	5,824	5,333	86·0
...	...	...	...	...	...	13,089	73,981	76,125	74,390	75,053	47·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,316	46,765	46,564	45,464	46,414	31·3
28	51	...	1,355	15	49	21,105	125,173	128,428	125,589	126,800	43·2
198	...	...	5,647	...	169	8,598	12,833	13,715	12,355	13,274	55·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	22,302	73,267	77,145	75,372	75,406	49·9
6 ...	...	...	...	...	...	8,475	57,383	58,305	56,711	57,889	32·2
198	...	...	5,647	...	169	39,075	143,483	149,655	145,039	146,569	43·4
226	51	...	7,002	15	218	10,998	17,766	19,454	18,780	18,607	64·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	35,391	147,348	153,070	149,673	150,459	48·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	13,791	103,648	104,959	102,176	104,303	31·2
226	51	...	7,002	15	218	60,180	268,856	278,083	270,629	273,369	43·3
1	...	...	114	...	4	196	593	620	587	606	72·0
...	...	...	...	...	...	858	1,981	2,287	2,169	2,134	28·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	276	1,202	1,259	1,192	1,230	34·7
1	...	...	114	...	4	1,330	3,776	4,166	3,948	3,971	36·8
154	...	...	7,824	...	103	17,232	29,109	30,520	28,939	29,814	55·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	10,642	18,140	19,800	18,439	18,970	13·2
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,061	24 935	24,366	22,647	24,201	15·5
154	...	...	7,824	...	103	24,335	71,284	74,686	70,885	72,985	31·3
165	...	...	1,164	3	94	2,889	7,810	7,899	7,160	7,854	39·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,539	6,638	7,777	7,205	7,297	43·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	1,468	6,741	6,905	6,541	6,825	43·4
165	...	...	1,164	3	94	7,886	21,189	22,581	20,909	21,885	49·2
152	...	...	11,566	2	964	17,412	45,739	44,581	43,227	45,160	56·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	13,968	41,015	44,047	40,662	42,831	33·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,779	35,206	34,902	32,433	33,254	31·7
152	...	...	11,566	2	964	36,879	121,960	123,530	116,268	123,245	40·0
301	...	...	12,543	5	867	18,128	47,181	48,652	44,941	47,916	54·6
...	...	...	...	...	...	14,052	36,161	36,718	34,029	36,439	38·9
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,019	41,601	40,954	37,726	41,277	33·5
301	...	...	12,543	5	867	38,119	124,943	126,324	117,287	125,633	43·1
773	...	...	33,211	10	2,032	49,867	130,412	132,272	124,918	131,352	53·6
...	...	...	...	...	...	43,119	104,515	110,659	103,939	107,582	32·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	15,603	129,185	128,336	120,539	128,785	29·9
773	...	...	33,211	10	2,032	108,589	364,112	371,267	348,496	367,719	39·9
999	51	...	40,213	25	2,250	60,865	126,192	131,726	143,698	140,959	36·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	78,419	251,783	264,299	252,712	258,021	41·9
...	...	...	...	...	...	29,324	232,833	233,345	222,215	233,689	30·8
999	51	...	40,213	25	2,250	168,609	632,808	649,370	619,125	641,089	41·4

ASSAM SECRETARIAT FRINTING OFFICE (REV.)NO. 181—300—19-9-98.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1898.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
1899.

Price One Rupee (or 1s. 4d.)

SHILLONG:
PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT
PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

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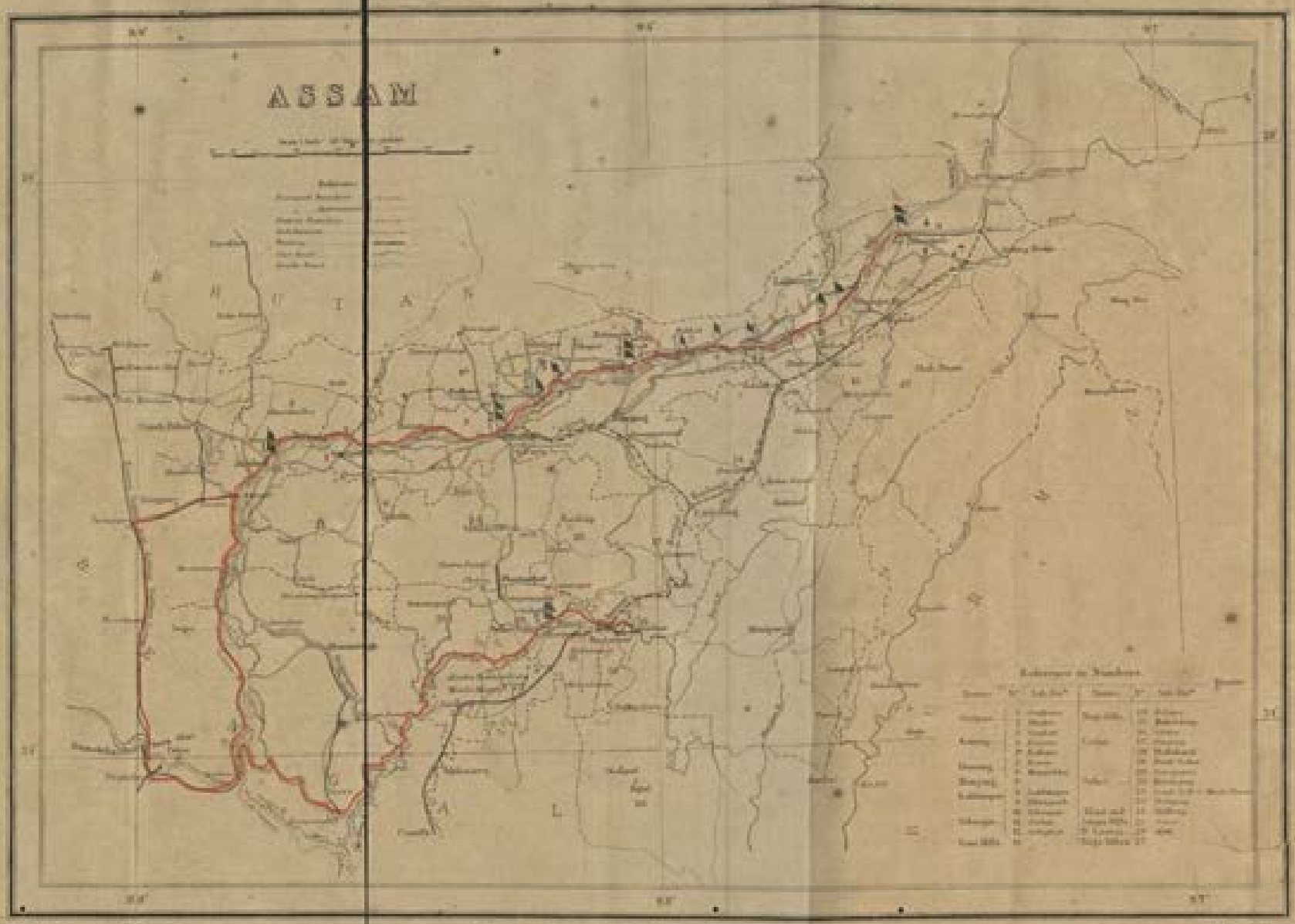
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REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR 1898.

CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION.

THIS report deals only with labour imported for employment on tea gardens throughout the province and in the oil refinery at Margherita, in coal-mines, and a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. It does not contain statistics of the labourers who migrate annually to the province during the cold weather in search of employment on the Assam-Bengal Railway or under the Public Works Department, returning to their homes in April and May.

2. The table below gives particulars of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past four years :

Provincial figures of immigration.

Class of labourers.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	Increase or decrease compared with 1897.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Act ... Sardari adults ...	8,988	10,460	22,490	12,080	— 10,410	— 46·2
Act ... Contractors' ,, ...	21,847	18,870	18,127	10,559	— 7,568	— 41·7
Non-Act adults	25,666	35,971	25,711	12,877	— 12,834	— 49·9
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	56,501	61,301	66,328	35,516	— 30,812	— 46·4
Children	16,336	19,814	29,603	13,653	— 15,950	— 53·8
Grand total	72,837	81,115	95,931	49,169	— 46,762	— 48·7

In this table and in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter, except paragraph 8 the expression "Act adults" includes, as in last year's report, those immigrants who, not being under contract, proceed to Dhubri and enter into contract there under section 112 of Act I of 1882.

The total number of coolies imported during the year was less than that of any year since 1890, with the exception of 1894. The decrease is greatest under the heads "Children" and "Non-Act adults," and least under the head "Contractors' adults." This is the natural reaction consequent on the excessive importation of the previous three years, when famine rendered recruiting easy, and managers took advantage of the cheap supply to import a large number of labourers. During the year under report there was a good harvest everywhere, and there was not the same incentive to emigration. Besides this, in Sylhet and Cachar, at least, the year has been a very bad one for tea, and managers have been compelled to restrict cultivation and importation of coolies.

3. Statistics are given in the table below for each division and district of the province for the last two years:

District and valley statistics of immigration.

District.	Act adults.			Non-Act adults.			Total of Act and non-Act adults.			Children.			Grand total, including children.		
	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar ...	1,546	811	—47·43	6,071	3,404	—43·93	8,517	3,915	— 54·03	3,040	1,071	—64·76	11,557	4,986	—56·85
Sylhet ...	2,487	979	—60·63	9,097	6,610	—30·13	11,584	7,589	—34·49	5,428	2,791	—48·56	17,012	10,380	—40·18
Total Surma Valley	4,033	1,790	—55·36	16,478	9,744	—40·86	20,511	11,544	—43·72	8,468	3,863	—54·38	28,979	15,407	—46·83
Kamrup ...	297	283	+ 7·72	70	56	—20·00	377	270	+ 0·72	143	104	—20·27	520	383	+ 5·80
Darrang ...	7,097	4,043	—43·26	1,033	416	—62·83	8,130	4,459	—45·06	2,334	1,178	—49·65	10,464	5,637	—51·56
Nowgong ...	3,015	1,170	—61·28	815	267	—67·6	3,871	1,446	—62·65	1,469	565	—61·00	5,320	2,011	—62·19
Sibsagar ...	11,351	6,701	—29·10	3,475	1,043	—69·98	14,827	7,744	—46·48	6,891	3,918	—43·06	21,735	11,662	—45·35
Lakhimpur ...	14,964	8,403	—43·21	3,768	1,351	—64·14	18,732	9,754	—47·94	8,301	3,615	—56·45	27,033	13,369	—50·54
Total Assam Valley	36,584	20,830	—43·01	9,233	3,133	—65·06	45,817	23,073	—49·63	19,138	9,700	—53·36	65,052	33,061	—49·17
Grand total ...	40,617	22,620	—44·30	25,711	12,877	—49·91	66,328	34,616	—47·82	29,603	13,563	—53·87	95,931	49,163	—48·74

The decrease has been general under every head, and in every district, with the exception of a small increase among Act coolies imported to Kamrup. In the Surma Valley the diminution in the number of coolies imported under the Act still goes on, and during the year only 1,800 were so imported out of a total of 11,544 adults. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet remarks—

> The number of Act coolies imported was less than 1,000. In Karimganj subdivision, the gardens of which contain a population of 42,703 of all classes, only 27 Act coolies were imported.

In the Assam Valley, on the other hand, the proportion of adults imported otherwise than under the Act was considerably less than in the preceding year.

4. The following is a statement of the nationality and sex of adult immigrants and the agency by which Act immigrants were imported:

Nationality of immigrants.

Nationality of immigrants.			Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
			Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
			1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Santhal parganas ...	Men ...	6,068	4,279	5,017	3,648	3,914	1,515	15,029	9,442
		Women ...	5,275	4,041	4,068	3,307	3,631	1,614	13,049	9,052
		Total ...	11,343	8,320	9,140	7,045	7,545	3,129	28,078	18,494
	Behar	Men ...	602	286	196	77	367	219	1,164	582
		Women ...	434	210	213	79	319	205	966	494
		Total ...	1,035	496	409	156	686	424	2,130	1,076
	Bengal Proper and Orissa ...	Men ...	599	334	914	614	799	515	2,312	1,463
		Women ...	396	302	1,067	629	843	468	2,416	1,399
		Total ...	1,005	636	1,981	1,243	1,642	983	4,728	2,862

Nationality of immigrants.		Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
		1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	Men	769	186	392	92	3,617	1,939	4,778	2,217
	Women	554	195	419	91	3,619	2,052	4,615	2,348
	Total	1,321	381	824	183	7,246	4,001	9,391	4,565
Central Provinces	Men	4,024	1,044	2,693	794	3,661	1,632	10,378	3,477
	Women	3,110	959	2,195	1,041	2,593	1,623	9,498	3,623
	Total	7,134	2,003	5,018	1,835	7,251	3,255	19,876	7,100
Madras	Men	314	84	441	57	690	512	1,175	653
	Women	229	85	101	38	608	508	938	631
	Total	573	169	542	95	1,298	1,020	2,113	1,284
Bombay	Men	2	...	8	...	...	...	10	...
	Women	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
	Total	4	...	8	...	...	...	12	...
Nepal	Men	3	...	5	...	...	...	8	...
	Women	2	...	...	...	...	5	2	5
	Total	5	...	5	...	...	5	10	5
Assam	Men	...	...	...	...	...	60	...	60
	Women	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	60	...	60
Total	Men	12,368	6,188	9,426	5,284	13,898	6,292	34,742	17,964
	Women	10,122	5,792	8,701	5,275	12,653	6,485	31,488	17,552
	Grand total	22,490	12,080	18,127	10,559	25,711	12,977	66,328	35,516

While there was a decrease in the number of coolies of every nationality imported, the number from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal parganas is larger than that of any previous year, except 1897, and, as in 1897, the majority of these coolies were imported through the agency of garden sardars. On the other hand, the table shows a marked decrease in importations from the North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces, the figures of which for the last four years are given below :

	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
Total importations from the North-Western Provinces	18,957	19,135	9,391	4,565
Total importations from the Central Provinces ...	7,932	17,285	19,876	7,100

The results are so far satisfactory in that they show a larger proportion of immigrants belonging to those castes which thrive best in Assam, but unfortunately the nationality of immigrants is not always correctly returned.

Female immigrants.

5. The following table shows the proportion borne by women to the total number of adult immigrants from the different areas of recruitment :

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to total adult immigrants among—							
	Sardari immigrants.		Contractors' immigrants.		Non-Act immigrants.		All adult immigrants.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ...	46·5	47·9	44·7	48·2	48·4	51·5	46·5	48·6
Behar	41·9	45·0	52·1	50·6	46·3	48·3	45·3	47·2
Bengal Proper and Orissa	47·5	47·4	53·0	50·6	51·3	47·6	51·2	48·8
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	41·9	51·1	52·4	49·7	50·1	51·5	49·1	51·4
Central Provinces	43·6	47·7	50·9	56·6	49·5	49·8	47·8	51 0

The steady increase in the percentage of female immigrants is satisfactory. The percentage of total women immigrants to total adults in 1898 was 49·4, as against 47·8 and 45·5 in 1897 and 1896, respectively. As in the previous year, the proportion of women to adults was greatest in the case of contractors' and non-Act coolies. Contractors have imported 5,275 women and 5,284 men, while in the case of non-Act immigrants the women are in excess of the men.

Extent to which Act labourers were recruited by contractors and garden sardars.

6. The statement below shows for each division and district the extent to which Act labourers were recruited by garden sardars and by contractors, respectively, and the average number imported by each sardar :

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.		Number of sardari coolies imported.		Average number of recruits per sardar.		Number of contractors' coolies imported.		Percentage of increase or decrease of importations of Act labourers during 1898, as compared with 1897.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	Sardari.	Contractors.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	168	93	722	371	4·2	3·9	824	440	—48·6	—46·6
Sylhet	470	178*	1,320	675	2·8	3·7	1,167	314	—48·8	—73·0
Total Surma Valley ...	638	271	2,042	1,046	3·2	3·8	1,991	754	—48·7	—62·2
Kamrup	12	18	121	121	10·0	6·7	86	102	...	+18·6
Darrang	690	1,050	4,826	2,242	6·9	2·1	2,201	1,801	—53·5	—18·1
Nowgong	228	155	1,680	646	7·3	4·1	1,365	533	—61·5	—60·9
Sibsagar	1,754	1,559	7,120	4,802	4·0	3·0	4,231	2,097	—32·5	—50·3
Lakhimpur	1,103	1,316	6,701	3,223	6·0	2·4	8,253	5,270	—51·8	—36·1
Total Brahmaputra Valley ...	3,787	4,098	20,448	11,034	5·4	2·6	16,136	9,805	—45·9	—39·2
Grand total	4,425	4,369	22,490	12,080	5·1	2·7	18,127	10,559	—46·2	—41·7

* Exclusive of 6 certificates cancelled afterwards.

As in 1897, the majority of the Act labourers were recruited by sardars. The proportion recruited by contractors, as compared with the total number imported, was 43·3 per cent. in 1897 and 46·6 in 1898. With regard to the Surma Valley, where the bulk of recruitment is carried on through uncertificated garden sardars, no inference can be drawn from the above statement; but it shows that in the Brahmaputra Valley the sardari method of recruitment has more than held its own. During previous

years the improvement in sardari recruiting has been attributed to the facility with which people were induced to emigrate during the stress of famine. It is encouraging to find that, under the changed conditions prevailing in 1898, the popularity of sardari recruitment with employers has not diminished. For purposes of comparison the number of coolies imported into the Assam Valley districts by sardars and by contractors, respectively, since 1895 is given below :

	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
Sardari coolies ...	6,941	9,477	20,448	11,034
Contractors' coolies ...	16,642	16,364	16,136	9,805

There was an increase of over 300 in the number of sardars sent down from the Assam Valley to recruit in 1898.

It is probable that the figures returned under the head of contractors' coolies include a large number of persons recruited by local agents specially licensed under section 62 of Act I of 1882, as in many cases these agents also carry on the business of unlicensed contractors, and, in making their returns, employers do not distinguish between the coolies supplied by them in either capacity.

Medical examination of sardari immigrants.

7. The table below shows, for the past two years, district by district, the number of certificates issued to sardars, which provided, under section 70 of the Act, for the medical examination of labourers prior to engagement; it also shows the proportion of such certificates to the total number of certificates granted to sardars:

District.	Number of certificates which provided for the medical examination of labourers.		Percentage of such certificates to total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardars.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	146	80	86·9	86·0
Sylhet	293	126	62·3	70·7
Kamrup	8	18	66·6	100·0
Darrang	343	623	49·7	59·3
Nowgong	215	119	94·3	76·7
Sibsagar	1,327	1,118	75·6	76·2
Lakhimpur	645	1,316	58·4	68·3
Total	2,977	3,400	67·3	77·8

While the increase in the percentage of such certificates from 67·3 to 77·8 in the whole province is satisfactory, there is still room for improvement in several districts, particularly in Darrang, where only 59·3 per cent. of the recruiting sardars were furnished with certificates under section 70. It will be pointed out later on in this report that sardari recruitment in some gardens in this district was very imperfectly supervised, and that a large avoidable mortality occurred in consequence of the enfeebled and impoverished character of coolies brought up by the sardars. This might have been avoided if certificates had been more liberally issued by employers under Section 70 of the Act.

Statistics of free or assisted emigration.

8. In the following statement figures are given separately concerning the following classes of adult immigrants :— (1) those recruited through contractors under Chapter III of the Act; (2) those recruited through garden sardars under Chapter IV of the Act; (3) those who entered into contracts under the Act at Dhubri; (4) those

who entered into contract under the Act in the actual labour districts; and (5) those who, after arrival in the labour districts, were employed as free labourers, *i.e.*, were not placed on contract under the Act:

District.	Act immigrants.			Free (non-Act) immigrants subsequently employed as Act labourers.			Free (non-Act) immigrants employed as free (non-Act) labourers and dependents.			Grand total.
	Contracted in recruiting districts.									
	Under Chapter III of Act.	Under Chapter IV of Act.	Total.	Contracted at Dhubri.	Contracted in actual labour district.	Total.	Adults.	Children.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	440	371	811	.	126	126	2,978	1,071	4,049	4,986
Sylhet	314	675	989	...	879	879	5,761	2,792	8,553	10,421
Total Surma Valley ...	754	1,046	1,800	...	1,005	1,005	8,739	3,863	12,602	15,407
Kamrup	85	94	179	44	...	44	56	104	160	383
Darrang	968	1,914	2,882	1,171	...	1,171	416	1,578	1,994	6,037
Nowgong	308	548	856	243	...	243	267	565	832	2,011
Sibsagar	1,263	4,185	5,448	1,453	254	1,707	789	3,928	4,717	11,872
Lakhimpur	1,052	2,849	3,901	2,792	25	2,817	1,326	3,615	4,941	13,459
Total Assam Valley ...	3,648	9,388	13,136	5,703	279	5,982	2,854	9,790	12,644	33,762
Grand total	6,302	10,434	16,936	5,703	1,284	6,987	11,593	13,653	25,246	49,169
Total of 1897	12,695	12,630	25,625	14,912	2,530	17,442	23,461	29,603	53,064	95,931

Five thousand seven hundred and three immigrants executed contracts at Dhubri, or 25·2 per cent. of the total number who executed contracts before arriving at the labour districts, as compared with 36·9 per cent. in the previous year and 44·2 per cent. in 1896. The decrease is most marked in the case of Act labourers imported through garden sardars, of whom 14·9 per cent. only executed contracts at Dhubri, as compared with 48·2 per cent. in 1897.

Cost of importation.

9. Complete or accurate information under this head is not available, but from the returns received it would appear that, in spite of the year having been less favourable for recruiting generally, there was no marked increase in the cost of importing labour as compared with the previous year. It is possible that the increased employment of sardars by gardens in the Brahmaputra Valley may have enabled them to keep down the cost of recruitment, and, if so, it must be regarded as a hopeful sign.

Medical rejections at Dhubri.

10. During the year 1898, the number of immigrants passing through the Dhubri depôts was 9,456, against 34,530 in the previous year. The decrease is attributed by the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts (1) to decrease in immigration generally, and (2) to the gradual supersession of Dhubri by Goalundo as the place of embarkation of immigrants. The number of coolies medically examined in 1898, with a view to placing them under contract, was 6,109, and of these, 405 persons were rejected by the Civil Surgeon. Of the number so rejected, 220 were sent up as dependents, 60 went as free coolies, and the remaining 125 were returned to their homes by depôt managers. The proportion of rejections to the whole number examined is 6·6, as compared with 8·1 in 1897. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts remarks—

> The Deputy Commissioner writes that only the coolies who were selected by the Civil Surgeon as "fit for work" are placed on contract. I presume this is a loose statement, and applies only to those cases in which the employer desires the Civil Surgeon in his private capacity to examine his coolies as to their fitness to labour, otherwise the Civil Surgeon should, according to law, confine his examination to seeing whether the coolies are fit to travel to their destinations.

As stated in previous reports, the present state of the law with regard to the examination of coolies at Dhubri is not satisfactory, but there can be no doubt that, as the law now stands, in the absence of a special arrangement with the employer, the only point to be determined by the Civil Surgeon is the fitness of the coolies to travel, and unhealthy coolies are therefore allowed to execute contracts and proceed to Upper Assam as soon as they are fit to travel.

Dhubri depôts.

11. There were, as in previous years, three contractors' depôts at Dhubri. The sanitary and other arrangements of the depôts were satisfactory, with the exception of that of Messrs. H. L. Mukherji & Co., regarding which the Commissioner remarks—

> The depôt of Messrs. H. L. Mukherji & Co. was not kept in as satisfactory a condition as usual. The Principal Medical Officer severely criticised its sanitary and medical arrangements at his inspection. I am glad to see that the condition of the depôt has since been improved.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley.

12. During the year the Assam-Bengal Railway was sanctioned as a route for immigrants, and coolies were conveyed to the Surma Valley either by that route or by steamer, country boats being no longer used as a means of transport. No statistics are available as to the number conveyed by steamer and rail, respectively. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar reports that the railway was very little used for the purpose of conveying coolies to his district, but there can be no doubt that much more use will be made of it now that the line has been opened to Silchar. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet states that a large number of immigrants came to that district by railway, but not so many as were expected, considering the speedier means of transit afforded by the railway. Reception depôts for coolies travelling by rail were opened at Shaistaganj, Kulaura, and Barlekha stations in Sylhet.

During the year the Chief Commissioner had under consideration the promulgation of rules to regulate the transport of labourers and dependents proceeding to the Surma Valley by feeder steamers. Owing, however, to the fact that the Steamer Companies had in large part anticipated the measures Mr. Cotton had intended to prescribe, and to the change of conditions in the Surma Valley resulting from the opening of the railway, which has caused a great decrease in the number of coolies travelling by feeder steamer, the Chief Commissioner, after his tour in the Surma Valley, decided that the rules contemplated had become unnecessary.

Debarkation depôts.

13. The extent to which debarkation depôts were used during the year is shown in the table below:

District,	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants to district.	Number that passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.	
				Through want of guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar ...	2	4,986	4,774	28	47	71	4,628	...	8,201 12 11	3,477 6 4
Sylhet* ...	9	10,421	5,178	...	22	51	1,612	...	2,792 15 6	3,982 15 6
Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	1	6,037	5,153	314	31	55	1,619	...	336 1 2	1,492 3 2
Nowgong ...	1	2,011	2,060†	238	15	104	1,723	...	1,046 12 0	562 3 5
Sibsagar ...	3	11,872	13,048‡	2,080	206	8	8,605	...	956 9 0	2,933 15 8
Lakhimpur ...	1	13,457	12,4.6	787	54	...	11,635	...	846 14 0	1,076 4 8
Total for 1898 ...	17	48,786	42,725	3,447	375	269	29,840	...	13,831 0 7	15,525 0 9
,, 1897 ...	14	95,511	54,894	5,439	1,287	2,728	27,391	33	3,496 8 0	15,453 5 0
,, 1896 ...	13	80,778	36,660	2,967	1,015	1,126	11,432	4	3,346 1 9	13,128 4 1

* In Sylhet figures for railway depots and the temporary depot at Inathganj are included.

† Includes immigrants for Golaghat subdivision.

‡ Includes 1,176 coolies destined for Lakhimpur district.

During the year the depôts at Sylhet sadr and Habiganj were closed, being no longer required; the temporary depôt at Inathganj, which was kept open only during the busy season, has also been closed since the end of the year. A new depôt was opened at Manumukh and three depôts at railway stations in the Sylhet district, as mentioned above. There was again a great increase in the percentage of coolies using the depôts, as compared with the total number of coolies imported, the percentage being 87·6 in 1898, against 62·7 in 1897. The increase is most marked in Lakhimpur, where it is due to the stricter enforcement of the rule requiring all Act coolies and their dependents to pass through the depôts. The greatest number of detentions occurred, as usual, at the depôts in the Sibsagar district owing to the practice of landing coolies for North Lakhimpur at the Kokilamukh depôt. A depôt for North Lakhimpur coolies at Kamalabari has been opened from the 1st December 1898.

In the report by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, I.M.S., on the arrangements for the transit of immigrants to Assam, one of the recommendations made was that, where the debarkation depôts are at a distance from the gardens served by them, rest-houses should be provided for the use of coolies at convenient intervals on the journey. In accordance with this suggestion, rest-houses at which food is provided for the coolies using them were established during the year at the following places:

District.			
Cachar	...	...	Sealtek. Jatingamukh.
Sylhet	...	...	Patharkandi.
Darrang	...	...	Bengbari. Kalaigaon.
Lakhimpur	...	...	Panigaon. Tengakhat. Sessaghurania. Kharjan.

The increase in the expenditure on buildings from Rs. 3,496 to Rs. 13,821 was due to the erection of these shelters, and to extensive improvements in the depôts, especially at Silchar, carried out under Colonel Campbell's recommendations.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

14. The statement below shows the number of deaths among all classes of immigrants during transit between the port of embarkation and their destination in the Assam Valley:

		Number of deaths		
		From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
On board the steamer.	Between Goalundo and Dhubri ...	4	15	19
	Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh (*a*) Goalundo coolies	18	7	25
	Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh (*b*) Jatrapur "	4	1	5
At Dhubri		16	1	17
" Gauhati		...	...	...
" Tezpur		12	3	15
" Silghat		3	...	3
" Nigriting		1	1	2
" Kokilamukh		2	9	11
" Disangmukh		11	2	13
" Dibrugarh		13	10	23
Total		84	49	133
Total for 1897		1,121	124	1,245

In 1896 the total number of deaths was 768, and in 1895, 248.

Making due allowance for the diminished volume of immigration during the year, and for the fact that the bulk of the immigrants were not, as in the two preceding years,

already weakened by famine before commencing their journey, the figures exhibit a most satisfactory decrease in the mortality in transit, which the Chief Commissioner has no doubt is due to the improvements which have been recently made in the arrangements for the railway and steamer journey. These improvements are the result of the enquiries which were carried out during the cold season of 1896-97 by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, I.M.S., who was specially deputed by this Administration, and by Captain Vaughan, I.M.S., under the orders of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and they may be said to have been brought to completion during the year under report, when revised rules under Act I of 1882 and Act I (B.C.) of 1889 were issued by the Bengal Government. By the new rules relating to railway traffic in Bengal emigration has been restricted to two routes, the one *vid* Naihati and Goalundo for the majority of emigrant coolies, and the other *vid* Katihar and Jatrapur for emigrants proceeding from the districts of Behar and the North-Western Provinces north of the Ganges; while a block system of telegraphic advices, based on the recommendations made by Captain Vaughan has been adopted with a view to preventing congestion of traffic. The Chief Commissioner confidently hopes that these arrangements, coupled with the system of segregating infected batches which has recently received the sanction of the Government of Bengal, will effectually prevent the infection of cholera from being carried from the railway carriages on board the Assam steamers. In the rules issued by the Government of Bengal for the treatment of emigrants on the steamer journey, Lieutenant Colonel Campbell's proposals have for the most part been adopted, and these rules, which the Steamer Companies had in many cases anticipated by carrying out improvements of their own accord, have since the close of the year been reproduced in rules issued by this Administration, which also contain provisions for the treatment of emigrants travelling by railway in Assam, and follow generally the Bengal rules on the same subject. Since the close of the year a Military Assistant Surgeon has been appointed to be travelling Inspector of Emigrants with headquarters at Dhubri.

Mortality during transit to the Surma Valley.

15. Accurate statistics of mortality among immigrants in transit to the Surma Valley are not available. A large proportion of these immigrants now come by railway, and in the case of those who travel by steamer, the difficulty of obtaining correct statistics is enhanced owing to the fact that they are usually transhipped in the course of the journey from the vessels in which they leave Goalundo into feeder steamers of light draught. The following figures are based on reports furnished by Hospital Assistants in charge of debarkation depôts in Sylhet and Cachar, and relate only to the mortality which occurred amongst the immigrants and their dependents who passed through the depôts:

District.	Year.	Number of immigrants who passed through the depôts.	Deaths.		
			En route from Goalundo.	At the depôts.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	1898	4,774	...	8	8
	1897	2,808	19	46	65
	1896	1,904	32*	25	57
Sylhet	1898	5,171†	2‡	4	6
	1897	7,338	25	55	80
	1896	4,552	19	9	28

* All on steamers. † Includes those who passed through railway depôts. ‡ One in steamer and one on the railway.

Although the statistics are not accurate, it is evident that there has been a marked diminution in the mortality among immigrants in transit to the Surma Valley owing to the year having been generally more healthy, and to the abatement of overcrowding on the feeder steamers consequent on improved accommodation and the diversion of a large share of the traffic to the Assam-Bengal Railway.

Anti-cholera inoculation.

16. Statistics obtained, as described in paragraph 17 of last year's report, of the coolies inoculated at Purulia who died (1) before embarkation, (2) between the port of embarkation and the garden, and (3) after arrival on the garden, are given below:

Statement showing the number of Deaths from Cholera amongst inoculated Coolies during the year 1898.

District.	Number of inoculated coolies imported.	Number of deaths from cholera among coolies shown in columns 3, 4 and 5				Remarks.
		Between recruiting district and port of embarkation.	Between port of embarkation and garden.	After arrival on garden.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	382	...	1	...	1	Seven absconded from gardens, and one denied having been inoculated.
Sylhet	206	...	...	...	...	
Kamrup	116	...	...	...	...	
Darrang	562	1	...	1	2	
Nowgong	189	...	...	...	...	
Sibsagar	868	...	...	1	1	
Lakhimpur	1,229	1	1	2	4	
Total	3,552	2	2	4	8	

Comparing the proportion of deaths from cholera among inoculated immigrants *en route* from the port of embarkation to the tea gardens in the Assam Valley with that among all coolies under the same circumstances, the percentage in the former case is found to be ·034, and in the latter ·248.

The Chief Commissioner, after consulting the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners of labour districts, has decided that it would not be advisable at present to add to the number of returns required from employers by prescribing an additional half-yearly return showing deaths from cholera on tea gardens among inoculated and uninoculated coolies. The statement suggested by Dr. Haffkine, giving details of deaths on tea gardens during cholera epidemics, has been prescribed since the close of the year as an optional return.

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

17. Careful enquiries were made, as in previous years, into all cases of alleged fraud or irregularity in recruitment. The cases enquired into at Dhubri were, as in 1897, of three classes, *viz.*,—

(*a*) Cases instituted in consequence of communications received from the districts of recruitment, either in the form of a letter from the Magistrate or Subdivisional Officer or District Superintendent of Police, or in the form of a petition or letter by post from the relatives of the person supposed to have been fraudulently recruited;

(*b*) those instituted on complaints made by the person concerned at Dhubri at the time of registration;

(*c*) cases in which the registering officer suspects fraud in the recruitment of young persons who come unaccompanied by relatives and who seem hardly old enough to look after themselves.

During the year there were 30 cases of the (*a*) class, 7 of the (*b*) class, and one of the (*c*) class. In only one case of the (*a*) class was any trace found of the coolie enquired about. It was found that his recruitment had not been fraudulent. Of the seven cases of the (*b*) class, no suspicion of fraud was found in four cases; in one there was an indication of fraud, but not sufficient evidence for prosecution, and the immigrant was repatriated under escort. Of the remaining two cases, one is still pending; in the other the complainant absconded before the enquiry could be completed. In the single case of the (*c*) description the attempt made to trace the antecedents of a female coolie failed.

18. The following table shows the total number of cases enquired into in the actual labour districts during the past two years, and distributes them according as they were ultimately declared to be true, false, or not proved :

Cases enquired into in the labour districts.

District.	Complaints.		True cases.		False cases.		Not proved.		Pending.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	37	4	37	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	8	1	8	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2	4*	...	1	...	...	...	3	2	...
Nowgong	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
Sibsagar	26	22	11	10	4	3	11	8†	...	1
Lakhimpur	34	53	10	22	11	18	9	6	4	7
Total	110	84	67	38	15	21	22	17	6	8

* This includes the two pending cases from 1897. | † Two cases in which emigrants were not traceable.

There has been a decrease in the number of complaints in every district except Darrang and Lakhimpur, but it is doubtful whether these figures indicate a real abatement of abuses in connection with recruitment. In every case in which there is a suspicion of fraud, the immigrant in question is repatriated at the expense of the garden or the contractor concerned.

19. The cases included in the above table are classified below separately for the two valleys, so as to show how many of the persons concerned had executed contracts of any description and, in the cases of immigrants under contract, where the contracts were executed :

—	Number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons.	Number under contracts.			Number not under contract.	Contracts executed in—				
			Act I of 1882.	Other forms of contracts.	Not stated.		Recruiting districts.	Calcutta or Goalundo.	Dhubri.	Labour districts.	Not stated.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Surma Valley ... True ...	5	13	2	10	...	1	10	2	...	...	...
Surma Valley ... False ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Surma Valley ... Not proved ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	5	13	2	10	...	1	10	2	...	...	...
Assam Valley ... True ...	33	55	48	5	...	2	31	6	16	...	...
Assam Valley ... False ...	21	30	24	2	3	1	17	1	8	...	3
Assam Valley ... Not proved ...	17	20	14	...	4	2	6	1	7	...	4
Total	71	105	86	7	7	5	54	8	31	...	7
Grand total	76	118	88	17	7	6	64	10	37	...	7
Grand total for 1897	104	143	118	9	9	7	50	41	36	...	9

Under section 11A of Act I of 1882, 33 contracts were cancelled by the Chief Commissioner. In four cases the execution of contracts denied by coolies was proved by means of thumb-impressions. In no case was objection made by an employer to the repatriation of immigrants whose recruitment was proved or suspected to be fraudulent.

CHAPTER II.

LABOUR FORCE.

Statistics of the labour force.

20. The statement below shows the additions to, and deductions from, the total labour force of the province during the year 1898:

Labour force remaining at the end of 1897	632,808
ADDITIONS—	
Imported by contractors or garden sardars, including free labourers and dependents imported direct	49,169
Local labour contracts entered into under sections 111 and 112 of Act I of 1882	28,737
Received from other gardens	9,295
Deserters recaptured	559
Remaining after expiry of contract	39,913
Otherwise obtained	21,203
Births	13,923
Total of additions	162,799
DEDUCTIONS—	
Transferred to other gardens	10,273
Left with permission or on expiry of contract	83,584
Deaths	20,017
Desertions	23,557
Free labourers put under contract	20,905
Contracts cancelled under section 11A	33
Contracts cancelled under sections 111, 140, or 177, Act I of 1882 ...	21
Contracts cancelled under section 122	690
Contracts cancelled under section 129	...
Contracts redeemed under section 142	8
Contracts dissolved by mutual consent	2,000
Total of deductions	161,088
Net increase during the year	1,711
Grand total at the close of the year	634,519

There is a small increase of 1,711 persons, or ·27 per cent., on the figures for 1897; in 1897 the increase as compared with the preceding year was 7·4 per cent.

Mean strength of the labour force.

21. The total labour force at the beginning of each of the last three years and the mean strength for the two half-years of 1898 are tabulated below:

Class of labourers.	1st January 1896.	1st January 1897.	1st January 1898.	1st July 1898.	Mean strength for the first half-year of 1898.	31st December 1898.	Mean strength of the second half-year of 1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Act adults	125,798	135,670	148,192	142,895	145,544	138,010	140,453
Non-Act Adults	216,091	241,124	251,783	267,970	259,876	258,071	263,020
Non-Act Children	195,423	212,085	232,833	240,038	236,435	238,438	239,238
Total	537,312	588,879	632,808	650,903	641,855	634,519	642,711

The labour strength reached its maximum in the middle of 1898.

District statistics of the labour force.

22. The total labour force of each district and the variations in strength during the year are shown below:

District.	1st January 1898.	31st December 1898.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	125,173	125,870	19·8	+ 697	+ ·55
Sylhet	143,483	142,631	22·5	— 852	— ·59
Total Surma Valley	268,656	268,501	42·3	— 155	— ·05
Kamrup	3,776	3,751	·6	— 25	— ·66
Darrang	71,284	69,447	11·0	— 1,837	— 2·57
Nowgong	21,189	20,103	3·2	— 1,086	— 5·12
Sibsagar	142,960	145,459	22·9	+ 2,499	+ 1·74
Lakhimpur	124,943	127,258	20·0	+ 2,315	+ 1·85
Total Assam Valley	364,152	366,018	57·7	+ 1,860	+ ·51
Grand total	632,808	634,519	100·0	+ 1,711	+ ·27

There has been a decrease in the total labour strength in all districts, except Cachar, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur, the greatest percentage of decrease being 5·12 in Nowgong.

23. The nationality and sex of the adult labour force during the last two years are shown in the following statement:

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

	Nationality.	Sex.	Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Ratio of nationality.
			1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	Men ..	41,019	40,211	47,130	49,412	88,168	89,623	44·8
		Women ..	35,732	36,341	48,761	50,718	84,493	87,059	
	Behar	Men ..	4,036	4,094	9,545	9,668	13,581	13,762	6·5
		Women ..	4,078	3,194	8,422	8,991	12,500	12,185	
	Bengal Proper and Orissa ..	Men .	20,652	8,022	23,046	23,187	33,698	31,209	16·9
		Women ..	10,076	8,420	27,746	27,253	37,822	35,677	
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ..		Men .	5,868	4,418	28,139	27,339	34,007	31,761	16·6
		Women ..	4,812	3,783	29,520	29,550	34,332	33,730	
Central Provinces		Men ..	13,709	12,205	7,161	8,145	20,870	20,350	10·0
		Women ..	11,393	11,113	6,597	8,407	17,990	19,520	
Madras		Men ..	2,743	2,759	2,927	2,811	5,670	5,570	2·7
		Women ..	1,870	2,022	2,839	3,005	4,709	5,027	
Bombay		Men ..	25	20	43	42	68	62	..
		Women ..	18	17	31	28	52	45	
Nepal		Men ..	38	31	60	122	98	153	..
		Women ..	19	5	62	74	81	79	
Assam		Men ..	2,556	854	7,117	5,637	8,673	6,561	2·5
		Women ..	1,028	484	2,839	2,722	3,867	3,206	
Total		Men ..	70,136	72,625	125,972	126,933	204,708	199,557	..
		Women ..	69,056	65,385	126,221	131,139	195,277	196,524	
Grand total		..	148,192	138,010	251,163	258,072	399,985	396,081	..

The most conspicuous increase is that of 1·6 per cent. in the ratio of coolies from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. These formed in 1898 44·8 per cent. of the whole adult labour force. There has been little change in the proportion of labourers of other nationalities.

24. Statistics of the labourers of each nationality employed in the divisions of the Surma and Brahmaputra Valley, respectively, are given in the statement below :

	Surma Valley.	Assam (Brahmaputra) Valley.
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas	38,777	137,904
Behar	14,424	11,523
Bengal Proper and Orissa	38,122	29,171
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	52,957	12,534
Central Provinces	11,915	28,061
Madras	6,798	3,789
Bombay	31	76
Nepal	52	180
Assam	714	9,053

The great majority of immigrants from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas and from the Central Provinces are employed in the Assam Valley, while the Surma Valley receives the majority of the Bengali and North-Western coolies.

25. The statement below shows the percentage of Act and non-Act labourers of each nationality :

Nationality.	1897.	1898.		
	Total.	Act labourers.	Non-Act labourers.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
Bengal { Chota Nagpur and Sonthal parganas ...	43·2	55·5	38·8	44·6
Bengal { Behar	6·7	5·3	7·3	6·6
Bengal { Bengal Proper and Orissa	17·6	13·9	19·7	16·9
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	17·1	6·0	22·2	16·6
Central Provinces	9·6	16·9	6·5	10·1
Madras	2·6	3·5	2·3	2·7
Assam	3·2	·9	3·2	2·5
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

More than half the Act and more than one-third of the non-Act labourers come from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. These are the best class of coolies for employment on tea cultivation.

Mean strength of the labour force in each district.

26. The statement below gives the mean strength of the labour force in each district for each half-year of 1898 and for the whole year. The percentages of mortality and desertions are calculated from these figures :

District.	Act.			Non-Act.						Total annual strength.		
				Adults.			Children.					
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	4,634	4,909	4,771	74,922	75,518	75,220	46,404	46,790	46,644	126,056	126,604	126,330
Sylhet	11,493	11,666	11,579	74,472	74,633	74,552	57,698	57,938	57,818	144,663	144,237	144,450
Kamrup ...	634	644	639	2,021	2,001	2,011	1,176	1,173	1,174	3,831	3,817	3,824
Darrang ...	28,318	26,570	27,454	19,112	19,793	19,452	24,575	24,703	24,639	72,005	71,067	71,546
Nowgong ...	7,868	7,852	7,710	7,209	7,127	7,168	6,800	6,655	6,727	21,878	21,335	21,606
Sibsagar ...	45,462	44,485	44,973	42,472	42,270	42,848	57,087	58,460	57,775	145,966	147,216	146,590
Lakhimpur ...	46,143	45,118	45,781	38,711	39,676	39,193	42,600	43,316	43,059	127,454	128,112	128,033
Total	145,544	140,453	142,998	251,875	263,020	261,448	236,435	237,036	237,836	641,855	642,711	642,383

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

Number of contracts made.

27. The number of contracts made in 1898 under Act I of 1882, as compared with the preceding year, is shown below:

	1897.	1898.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
In the actual labour districts under section 111 of the Act.	15,265	13,671	—10·4
In the actual labour districts under section 112 of the Act.	14,723	15,066	+ 2·3
At Dhubri under section 112A of the Act.	14,893	5,700	—61·7
In the recruiting districts ...	25,625	16,936	—33·9
Total	70,506	51,373	—27·1

The principal feature in the above statement is the marked decline in the number of Dhubri contracts. The system of placing coolies under contract at Dhubri is evidently declining in popularity.

28. In the following statement the number of contracts returned as executed under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code is given for each district:

	1897.	1898.
Cachar	486	1,100
Sylhet	451	84
Kamrup	21	22
Darrang	...	...
Nowgong	...	...
Sibsagar	1,947	1,032
Lakhimpur	...	1,156
Total	2,905	3,394

The increase in contracts of this kind was remarkable in Cachar and in Lakhimpur. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar says that these contracts are becoming popular, but does not explain why, or for what purpose they are used. The coolies under contracts of this description in Lakhimpur were persons employed by the Assam Railways and Trading Company who were omitted by mistake from the returns of the previous year, and have been included in those for 1898. No statistics are available of labourers who executed contracts under Act XIII of 1859. Contracts under that Act are most in favour in the Surma Valley.

29. The following statement shows the number of contracts executed locally under sections 111 and 112 of the Act, and the sex and nationality of the labourers entering into such contracts:

Nationality of labourers executing local contracts.

District.	Sex.	Contracts under section 111.	Contracts under section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality.											Total of columns 3 and 4.
				Ch. la Nagpur and Santal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Bombay.	Nepal.	Assam.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cachar	Men ...	52	35	14	22	17	11	23	...	...	...	...	87
	Women ...	20	19	7	...	10	5	17	...	...	...	...	39
	Total of 1898 ...	72	54	21	22	27	16	40	...	...	...	...	126
	,, ,, 1897 ...	47	120	18	6	21	49	52	2	...	...	...	147
Sylhet	Men ...	2,585	458	752	376	544	330	198	778	...	1	4	2,983
	Women ...	1,922	427	519	248	423	262	97	716	...	...	6	2,349
	Total of 1898 ...	4,447	885	1,271	624	1,033	590	295	1,494	...	1	10	5,332
	,, ,, 1897 ...	4,206	1,807	1,513	751	1,658	833	405	1,617	...	1	13	6,193
Kamrup	Men ...	4	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
	Women ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total of 1898 ...	4	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
	,, ,, 1897 ...	1	25	2	...	2	...	22	...	...	...	...	26
Darrang	Men ...	1,590	1,014	1,476	144	311	97	218	105	...	3	259	2,613
	Women ...	1,641	736	1,486	121	259	66	154	157	...	...	132	2,375
	Total of 1898 ...	3,231	1,750	2,962	265	580	163	372	262	...	3	391	4,988
	,, ,, 1897 ...	3,569	1,681	3,439	337	475	45	291	202	...	1	1,057	5,350
Nowgong	Men ...	243	87	228	16	51	7	29	...	...	...	7	330
	Women ...	279	11	264	35	63	5	23	...	...	...	1	290
	Total of 1898 ...	522	98	492	51	114	12	42	...	...	...	8	619
	,, ,, 1897 ...	558	178	438	36	172	32	64	2	...	...	5	736
Sibsagar	Men ...	1,033	3,423	3,630	446	698	217	225	65	...	...	201	4,456
	Women ...	932	3,133	3,522	241	734	145	133	51	...	...	129	4,955
	Total of 1898 ...	1,965	6,566	7,152	787	1,432	362	358	116	...	...	334	9,541
	,, ,, 1897 ...	2,570	6,297	8,189	770	1,503	546	402	146	...	...	321	9,867
Lakhimpur	Men ...	1,765	3,298	3,831	169	305	123	598	99	...	1	13	5,003
	Women ...	2,699	2,415	3,068	59	470	119	285	68	...	...	25	4,114
	Total of 1898 ...	4,464	5,713	6,919	168	765	242	883	167	...	1	68	9,117
	,, ,, 1897 ...	4,634	4,615	8,625	185	846	228	321	139	19	37	45	8,649
	Grand total of 1898	13,671	15,060	16,731	1,917	4,055	1,389	1,750	2,139	...	5	811	28,737
	,, ,, 1897	15,585	14,727	16,224	2,083	4,727	1,836	2,109	19	37	1,413	29,982

Contracts under section 111 are for terms not exceeding one year, and do not require the intervention of a Magistrate at the time of execution. Those under section 112 may extend to four years, and must be attested by a Magistrate or Inspector. The fluctuations in the above table do not call for special remark. The increase in contracts under section 112 and decrease under section 111 took place principally in the Lakhimpur district, where the Deputy Commissioner attributes these changes to the correction of a faulty procedure by which contracts for one year, when executed in the presence of a Magistrate or Inspector, were formerly returned as executed under section 111 of the Act.

Details of local contracts.

30. Details of local contracts entered into in the actual labour districts, the classes of labourers who entered into them, and the periods of the contracts are given in the table below:

District.	Section 111.	Section 112.	Class of labourers.				Number of years.					
			Newly-imported.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolies transferred.	Local.	Under one year.	One.	Two.	Under two and a half.	Three.	Four.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	72	54	42	81	...	...	...	29	55	...	42	...
Sylhet	4,447	893	870	4,197	...	256	...	4,447	30	...	819	36
Kamrup	4	...	...	4	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...
Darrang	3,248	1,750	..	3,057	...	1,041	24	3,306	1,205	4	266	193
Nowgong	521	98	...	291	...	328	...	521	46	...	19	33
Sibsagar	1,035	6,566	254	7,305	...	982	134	2,939	4,672*	796‡	...	...
Lakhimpur ...	3,403	5,713	25	8,926	...	166	...	3,788	4,302†	26	622§	379‖
Total of 1898 ...	13,671	15,066	1,200	24,764	...	2,773	158	15,034	10,310	826	1,768	641
Total of 1897 ...	*15,265*	*14,723*	*2,216*	*24,603*	..	*3,169*	*458*	*15,612*	*6,074*	*1,273*	*5,240*	*1,331*

* Includes 1,001 contracts under two years.
† " 2 " " " "
‡ Includes 57 contracts under two years and a half.
§ " 1 contract under four years.
‖ Includes 2 contracts under three years.

The number of contracts entered into for two years or less was 88·7 per cent. of the whole. The great majority of the contracts entered into by newly-arrived coolies were, as in previous years, executed in Sylhet.

Periods of contracts executed at Dhubri.

31. The following table shows the periods for which contracts were executed at Dhubri during 1897 and 1898:

Year.	Three-year contracts.			Four-year contracts.			Total contracts.		
	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1897	*225*	*162*	*387*	*14,668*	*10,911*	*25,579*	*14,893*	*11,073*	*25,966*
1898	113	72	185	5,587	2,181	7,768	5,700	2,253	7,953

Ninety-eight per cent. of the contracts executed at Dhubri were for the maximum period of four years.

Verification of contracts.

32. An account of the local contracts executed under section 111 which were verified by the Magistrate or Inspector during 1898 is given in the table below :

District.	Number of contracts under section 111.			Number verified.	Number not capable of verification on account of—					Percentage of contracts verified.	
	Remaining unverified at close of previous year.	Executed during the year.	Total.		Expiry of contracts.	Death or desertion of labourers.	Sickness of the labourers.	Other causes.	Total.	(a) On total number of contracts.	(b) On contracts capable of verification.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	...	72	72	72	...	...	...	...	...	100·0	100·0
Sylhet	245	4,447	4,692	4,315	134	73	45	123	377	91·9	100·0
Kamrup	...	4	4	...	...	...	...	4	4	...	...
Darrang	770	2,248	4,018	3,203	169	31	23	586	813	79·7	100·0
Nowgong	82	521	603	452	66	8	4	23	151	74·9	100·0
Sibsagar	282	1,975	2,257	2,012	9	3	7	226	245	89·1	100·0
Lakhimpur	854	3,404	4,258	3,615	449	1	...	1,172	1,622	84·9	100·0
Total	2,233	17,671	19,904	13,990	827	116	88	2,183	3,214	79·7	100·0

79·7 per cent. of the total number of contracts executed were verified, as compared with 83 2 per cent. in 1897, the remainder being incapable of verification.

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

33. The table below shows the number of contracts which expired by lapse of time, the number of such expiries reported, and the number of contracts cancelled or determined during the year under the different sections of the Act :

District.	Number shown in garden returns as time expired.	Number of times expired contracts reported under section 121.	Number cancelled under section 112.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 114.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 115.	Number suspended by Inspector for temporary incapacity, section 130.	Number cancelled by Inspector for permanent incapacity, section 131.	Number made void by finding of Commissioner or by orders of Local Government by reason of unfitness of employer, section 132 and 134.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 140A.	Number redeemed under section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	1,284	1,384	...	...	...	...	4	80	...	...	...	22
Sylhet	6,752	6,949	1	1	...	...	90	...	...	...	...	66
Kamrup	634	70	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	9,822	9,822	1	...	...	...	37	...	...	...	...	558
Nowgong	1,448	1,448	...	...	...	...	161	...	...	...	...	9
Sibsagar	13,145	13,861	10	...	...	...	150	...	...	...	6	717
Lakhimpur	14,529	14,067	21	...	...	...	329	...	...	...	*	448
Total of 1898	47,574	47,455*	33	1	...	...	650	20	...	...	6	2,000
,, ,, 1897	40,213	40,062	70	...	1	...	599	69	...	1	85	2,250

* This includes 583 contracts which were dissolved by mutual consent.

34. *Section* 141.—*Notice of determination of contracts.*—The expiry of contracts was punctually reported, except in Lakhimpur, where notice was not given of the expiry of 532 contracts; and in Kamrup, where only 76 out of the 124 time-expired contracts were reported. In Kamrup, this remissness is attributed to the illness of the Manager of Amchang garden, but no explanation is given of the failure to report the determination of contracts in Lakhimpur. The Chief Commissioner had occasion last year to animadvert on the neglect of the managers in Lakhimpur in complying with the law on this point, and although there is a slight improvement in the present year, the results in this district are still far from satisfactory.

35. *Section* 111A.—*Cancelment of contracts for irregularities in recruitment.*—Under this head 33 contracts were cancelled, as compared with 70 in 1897, the labourers being repatriated at the expense of the gardens or the contractors. The decrease was almost entirely in the Surma Valley, where only one contract was cancelled under section 111A, as compared with 35 in the preceding year.

36. *Cancelment of contracts under sections 111A and 111B.*—No contracts were cancelled during the year under section 111B, and only one under section 111A in the Habiganj subdivision of Sylhet.

37. *Section* 122.—*Cancelment of contracts for permanent incapacity.*—The number of contracts cancelled in 1697 and 1698, owing to the persons bound by them becoming permanently incapacitated for labour, the proportion of such labourers who were newly imported, and the agency by which they were imported, are shown in the following statement:

Districts.	Number of contracts cancelled under section 122.		Newly imported.	Agency by which imported.		
	1897.	1898.		Contractor.	Sardar.	Locally engaged.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	28	4	4	4	...	...
Sylhet	198	20	...	14	...	6
Kamrup	1	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	151	37	...	29	8	...
Nowgong	165	101	12	155	3	3
Sibsagar	152	139	50	88	50	1
Lakhimpur	301	309	34	277	47	5
Total	997	690	109	567	108	15

There has been a decrease of about 30 per cent. in the number of contracts so determined. The decrease is distributed over all the districts with the exception of Lakhimpur, where managers, as remarked in last year's report, freely take advantage of the section to return to their country coolies who are unfit for work.

38. *Contracts dissolved by mutual consent.*—The following statement gives the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent in 1897 and in 1898:

District.	1897.	1898.
Cachar	49	22
Sylhet	169	66
Kamrup	4	...
Darrang	103	538
Nowgong	91	9
Sibsagar	964	717
Lakhimpur	867	648
Total	2,250	2,000

From the reports received from the district officers, it appears that the only districts in which contracts were cancelled by mutual consent with a view to renewal were Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur. In Darrang 103 and in Lakhimpur 420 contracts were cancelled as a preliminary to the execution of fresh contracts.

The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar has not furnished statistics on this point, but makes the following remarks in his report—

As usual, the dissolutions were effected for renewal of the contracts. As a matter of fact, the employers are glad to get new labour contracts from acclimatised labourers, and do not mind cancelling the unexpired portion of their original contracts. In a few instances, it has also been observed that in this way labourers' contracts were renewed in order that they might be sent as sardars to recruit coolies from recruiting districts.

39. *Sections 129 and 132.—Contracts made void in consequence of estates being declared unfit for the residence of labourers.*—The general healthiness of the year under report explains the fact that only twenty contracts became void in consequence of the estates on which the labourers were employed being declared unfit for the residence of labourers.

40. *Section 142.—Redemption of contracts.*—Only 8 contracts were redeemed, as compared with 25 in 1897. In Cachar, where there were 15 redemptions in 1897, there have been none in the year under report.

41. Managers do not often take advantage of section 170 and the second paragraph of section 121 of the Act. During 1898 the manager of Amluckie tea estate in Nowgong sent to the Deputy Commissioner a list of absentees under section 170, and after enquiry the periods of absence were added to the labour contracts as provided by the section.

Extent to which section 170 and the second paragraph of section 121 are made use of.

42. Certain particulars are given in the following statement regarding the repatriation of labourers on tea gardens under the provisions of the Act :

Repatriation of labourers whose contracts were cancelled.

| 1 | 2 | | |

Of 33 coolies whose contracts were cancelled under section 11A, 23 were repatriated under section 11C at the expense of their employers, and three had been returned to the recruiting districts on warrant before orders were passed under section 11A. The proportion of coolies liable to repatriation under section 142B who preferred to remain on the garden was about the same as in 189 . A scheme for improving the system of repatriation of immigrants is at present engaging the attention of the Chief Commissioner.

Wages.

43. The figures given in the table below are based on information obtained by officers inspecting gardens, who are required to ascertain the wages paid during the month preceding that in which the inspection is held:

Subdivision.	Act.		Non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr	4 12 6	3 8 0	4 14 0	3 12 0	2 8 0
Hailakandi	4 10 9	3 3 8	4 10 0	3 10 8	2 1 9
North Sylhet ...	4 3 11	2 15 0	4 14 4	3 9 0	2 2 9
South ,, ...	5 0 5	4 0 1	4 14 2	3 10 1	2 3 11
Karimganj	4 6 3	3 6 0	4 6 1	3 4 2	2 2 8
Habiganj	4 12 6	3 4 6	5 1 1	3 9 1	2 2 8
Kamrup	4 13 6	3 12 0	5 0 5	3 11 3	2 9 5
Darrang, sadr ...	4 9 8	3 11 3	4 15 8	3 7 7	2 4 1
Mangaldai	4 4 3½	3 4 8	5 8 4	3 1 6	2 5 3
Nowgong	4 11 4	3 13 9	5 9 6	4 3 7	2 11 3
Sibsagar, sadr ...	5 2 4	3 12 11	5 10 7	3 13 11	2 8 9
Jorhat	4 10 11	3 12 0	5 15 10	3 10 3	2 6 8
Golaghat ...	4 4 1	3 11 11	5 3 3	3 8 3	2 5 4
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	5 4 4	1 1 10	6 8 0	4 14 3	2 15 9
North Lakhimpur ...	4 12 4	3 9 2	4 6 2	3 4 7	2 2 8

The amount of wages earned by coolies varies considerably month by month, but the table is useful for the purpose of comparing the earnings of Act coolies with those of free labourers.

44. The table below shows separately the average wages paid to coolies during the manufacturing and non-manufacturing seasons respectively. The wages in the manufacturing seasons are generally higher, as more *ticca* or extra work carrying with it extra pay is then done:

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr ...	Manufacturing	4 12 0	3 8 6	5 4 0	4 6 8	2 8 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 0	3 4 0	4 8 0	3 8 0	2 2 6
Hailakandi ...	Manufacturing	4 8 11	3 3 8	4 6 5	4 0 1	2 2 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 9	3 2 9	4 4 3	3 4 8	1 14 2
North Sylhet ...	Manufacturing	4 3 1	3 1 9	4 14 8	3 13 1	2 3 10
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 5 1	3 0 8	4 10 4	3 8 2	1 15 5
South ,, ...	Manufacturing	5 0 6	4 0 4	4 15 2	3 11 2	2 4 11
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 12 6	3 13 1	4 6 10	3 2 6	1 12 6
Karimganj ...	Manufacturing	4 3 9	3 9 8	4 12 6	3 4 9	2 4 5
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 8 10	3 2 1	3 14 11	3 3 6	2 0 0

Subdivision.	Section.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Habiganj ..	Manufacturing ...	4 6 11	3 5 9	5 4 4	3 15 3	2 3 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 3	3 5 2	4 10 2	3 8 0	1 14 4
Kamrup ...	Manufacturing	5 4 3	4 2 2	5 9 8	4 [illegible] 0	2 12 7
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 6 10	3 3 10	4 7 3	3 6 7	2 6 4
Darrang, sadr	Manufacturing	5 10 9	4 13 1	6 8 5	4 3 3	2 9 4
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 7 11	3 12 4	5 14 11	3 [illegible] 7	1 15 [illegible]
Mangaldai ...	Manufacturing	5 10 11	4 11 7	5 7 8	3 14 1	2 6 2
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 15 7	3 7 4	4 11 5	3 5 8	1 14 10
Nowgong	Manufacturing	4 14 4	4 1 3	6 1 5	4 10 10	2 14 9
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 5 4	3 10 3	5 1 6	3 12 3	2 7 9
Sibsagar, sadr	Manufacturing	5 2 7	3 12 9	5 13 8	3 12 10	2 9 2
	Non-manufacturing ...	5 2 2	3 15 2	5 7 6	3 15 1	2 8 4
Jorhat	Manufacturing	5 1 10	4 2 4	5 13 4	3 15 4	2 7 10
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 0	3 5 9	5 2 5	3 5 2	2 5 6
Golaghat	Manufacturing	4 8 9	3 10 9	5 8 2	3 13 6	2 7 8
	Non-manufacturing ...	3 15 6	3 13 4	4 14 4	3 3 0	2 3 0
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	Manufacturing	5 7 5	4 8 3	7 0 6	5 7 0	3 4 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	5 2 4	4 1 6	6 4 0	4 5 6	2 13 3
North Lakhimpur ...	Manufacturing	4 14 6	4 0 3	4 15 10	3 8 8	2 0 6
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 10 3	3 2 1	5 12 6	3 0 7	2 4 6

The question of raising the present minimum statutory rates of wages (Rs. 5 a month for men and Rs. 4 a month for women) is likely before long to come under consideration in connection with the amendment of Act I of 1882; the Chief Commissioner, therefore, refrains from discussing the proposal in this place. In his opinion, however, it is as necessary now as it was in 1865, when the present rates were fixed, to require by statute that an adequate living wage shall be paid to a coolie entering into a penal labour contract, for a fair day's work, and it must be remembered that the cost of living is much greater now than it was in 1865.

CHAPTER IV.

OFFENCES, INCLUDING DESERTIONS.

45. The following table shows the number and description of offences against the Penal Code and other laws (excluding Act I of 1882 and Act XIII of 1859) committed by tea-garden coolies during the past two years:

Offences committed by the tea-garden population against the general criminal law.

District.	Offences under Penal Code.										Offences under Act V of 1861.	Offences under other Acts.	Grand total of all offences.
	Culpable homicide, including murder.	Rioting and unlawful assembly.	Causing hurt and grievous hurt.	Assault.	Theft.	Criminal trespass, house-breaking and lurking house-trespass.	Dishonestly receiving stolen property.	Breach of contract—Section 492.	Other offences under the Penal Code.	Total.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cachar	...	23	1	2	12	...	1	1	14	44	23	...	67
Sylhet	...	30	12	1	12	3	7	...	10	75	3	16	93
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2	20	2	2	14	7	4	...	1	52	2	3	57
Nowgong	1	5	1	2	2	2	...	...	...	13	...	...	13
Sibsagar...	2	24	5	60	28	8	...	53	934	21	26	274
Lakhimpur	...	20	10	21	48	29	4	1	12	146	10	23	179
Total of 1898	5	152	32	33	141	59	24	2	89	564	28	68	670
„ „ 1897	6	190	63	40	102	71	21	45	93	655	49	16	720

The grand total of offences exhibits a very satisfactory decrease of 12·0 per cent., which is distributed under almost every head in the statement.

46. The following table shows the offences which were committed by the tea-garden population, for the past two years under Act I of 1882, excluding the offence of desertion, which is separately dealt with below:

Offences committed by the tea-garden population under Act I of 1882, excluding desertions.

District.	Act I of 1882.																			
	Section 184, striking, unfair dealing, or refusal to labour.		Section 185, garden-sirdar neglecting to perform certain duties enjoined on him by law.		Section 186, labourers deserting, etc., after registration.		Section 187, employers refusing or omitting to keep registers, etc.		Section 188, employers neglecting to provide hospital accommodation.		Section 189, labourers absent without cause.		Section 198, inducement to commit breach of contract or enticing away labourer under contract.		Section 489, enticing away, harbouring, or employing labourer under contract.		Total.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
Cachar	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	...		
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	4	2		
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	24	...	...	1	...	1	...		
Darrang	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	12	1	...	5	6	22	17		
Nowgong	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	14	5	14		
Sibsagar	16	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	7	1	...	22	2	32	18		
Lakhimpur	11	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35	10	...	...	14	9	60	26		
Total	31	15	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	56	53	2	...	50	33	139	77		

The total number of offences is 40·3 per cent. less than that of 1897. As the total for 1897 was the same as for 1896 and less than it had been for several years before, the continued decrease must be considered a matter for congratulation. The

decrease is distributed over all the districts except Nowgong, where the number of offences under section 183 increased from 2 to 14. This increase was due to the punishment of 8 of the ringleaders of about 300 coolies who deserted from the Kangamati garden in consequence of a misunderstanding with the native assistant manager. The assistant manager has since been changed.

Desertions.

47. The following table shows the number of desertions reported among the adult tea-garden population, district by district, for the past two years :

District.	Total desertions among adults.		Desertions among Act population.		Desertions among non-Act population.		Percentage of desertions on strength among—					
							Act population.		Non-Act population.		Total adult population.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	5,800	3,182	624	330	5,176	2,852	11·05	7·48	6·92	3·78	7·22	3·98
Sylhet	9,246	6,028	1,316	740	7,730	5,288	10·02	6·68	10·24	7·08	10·21	6·94
Kamrup... ...	379	370	34	51	345	319	5·09	15·99	15·99	13·78	13·78	13·94
Darrang ...	1,747	2,098	1,090	1,899	657	1,199	3·39	3·27	3·52	6·16	3·63	4·47
Nowgong ...	1,077	545	516	363	561	182	6·87	4·70	7·78	2·54	7·47	3·66
Sibsagar ...	2,654	2,711	1,300	1,331	1,354	1,380	2·94	2·95	3·23	3·14	3·08	3·05
Lakhimpur ...	2,907	3,035	1,552	1,589	1,415	1,446	3·33	3·47	3·96	3·68	3·61	3·57
Total	23,670	17,969	6,432	5,303	17,238	12,666	4·38	3·70	6·75	4·84	5·89	4·43

The table shows a satisfactory decrease in the total number of desertions, though there was a slight increase in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Desertions are most numerous in Sylhet and Cachar, from which districts coolies abscond either to Hill Tippera, where they are welcomed as useful cultivators, or to the Assam-Bengal Railway, where they get much larger pay from contractors than on the tea-gardens. The managers of a number of gardens in Cachar submitted a representation to the Chief Commissioner during his winter tour in the Surma Valley, in which they pointed out that by the action of the railway contractors they were deprived of labour which had cost them much expense and trouble to import under contract, and requested the assistance of Government in recovering the coolies under agreement who had deserted to the railway. Mr. Baker, the Subdivisional Officer of North Cachar, was accordingly instructed to help in tracing the absconding coolies, and was given an assistant for about three months to enable him to give his attention to this work.

Arrests and convictions of deserters under Act contracts.

48. The following table shows for each district (1) the number of desertions of labourers under contract under Act I of 1882; (2) the number of warrants issued for the arrest of such deserters; (3) the number of such deserters arrested; and (4) the number convicted of desertion (section 175, Act I of 1882):

District.	Number of desertions (Act labourers).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested.					Number convicted.
			By warrant.	By manager.	By police.	By summons.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	330	27	2	12	2	...	16	15
Sylhet	740	74	5	22	8	...	35	37
Kamrup	51	...	...	1	7	...	8	8
Darrang	899	106	31	21	1	...	53	49
Nowgong... ...	363	16	5	7	...	...	12	11
Sibsagar	1,331	92	27	61	1	3	92	84	
Lakhimpur ...	1,589	99	43	108	...	3	154	146
Total of 1898 ...	5,303	414	113	232	19	6	370	350
" " 1897 ...	6,432	497	124	552	19	2	697	639

Only 6·5 per cent. of the deserters were convicted.

49. The following table shows the manner in which complaints under Act XIII were dealt with during the past two years:

Cases under Act XIII of 1859.

District.	Number of coolies convicted.		Number of coolies who were ordered to perform their contracts.		Number punished with imprisonment for—				Cases withdrawn.		Number of coolies ordered to pay their advances or pay compensation.	
					Two weeks or less.		More than two weeks.					
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	25	49*	22	28	1	4	2	11	27	2	...	...
Sylhet	24	17	19	14	...	...	1	1	...	45	4	2
Kamrup	3	1	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	14	8	13	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Nowgong	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	52	75	37	58	10	7	3	9	3	1	...	1
Lakhimpur	37	14	36	13	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
Total	156	160	131	120	12	11	8	22	30	48	5	5

* Includes two cases withdrawn.

There is very little difference between the figures for 1898 and those for the preceding year. A large number of the desertions of coolies bound under Act XIII take place from the gardens along the border of Hill Tippera. The managers complain of the impossibility of getting back such coolies or punishing them.

50. The following table shows the proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens:

Proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

District.	Mean strength.		Number of desertions.		Percentage of desertions to labour force.		
	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	125,290	939	3,764	109	3·00	11·6	3·06
Sylhet	138,859	5,590	7,868	404	5·65	7·22	5·71
Kamrup	2,955	870	469	14	15·87	1·60	12·73
Darrang	60,327	11,219	2,952	498	4·89	4·43	8·82
Nowgong	15,237	6,369	240	87	3·15	2·72	3·02
Sibsagar	132,017	14,573	2,738	536	2·07	3·67	2·23
Lakhimpur	119,549	8,484	3,235	315	2·70	3·71	2·77
Total	594,234	48,044	21,266	1,963	3·58	4·08	3·61
Total of 1897	*534,487*	*95,615*	*23,945*	*6,358*	*4·40*	*6·64*	*4·71*

On the whole, unhealthiness does not seem to have had any great influence on the number of desertions.

51. The following table shows the punishments inflicted during the past two years on Act labourers for desertion from healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively :

Punishment for desertion in the case of healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

	District.	Number of Act labourers convicted of the offence of desertion		Number punished with imprisonment for—																			
				Two months.		Six weeks.		One month.		Three weeks.		Fifteen days.		Two weeks.		Ten days.		One week.		One day.		Others.	
		1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
From healthy gardens.	Cachar ...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	5	...	...
	Sylhet ...	37	20	1	...	...	...	4	11	1	2	7	3	7	...	5	2	6	3	1	5	...	...
	Kamrup ...	5	8	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	...	...	5	...	...	...	1
	Darrang ...	73	49	2	...	...	...	8	11	7	4	4	...	10	14	4	3	7	4	1	...	27	13*
	Nowgong ...	34	6	...	...	...	...	10	1	...	11	...	...	3	3	...	1	...	...	9	3	...	...
	Sibsagar ...	102	71	...	1	1	1	12	6	...	1	6	...	25	17	10	13	29	23	13	4	6	6
	Lakhimpur ...	234	120	2	1	2	...	14	14	18	17	21	20	15	20	56	6	50	22	32	19	16	1
	Total ...	484	286	7	1	5	1	48	46	26	25	37	20	60	57	75	25	97	52	56	32	54	21
From unhealthy gardens.	Cachar ...	29	5	...	1	...	...	12	2	...	...	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	13	...	...	...
	Sylhet ...	8	17	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	...	5	3	1	...	...	2	2	4	...	...	...	...
	Kamrup ...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Darrang ...	8	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
	Nowgong ...	2	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
	Sibsagar ...	40	13	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	7	...	4	3	10	...	6	7	8	...	2	1
	Lakhimpur ...	65	26	...	...	...	...	4	5	2	3	4	1	5	5	13	1	16	11	18	3	3	...
	Total ...	154	64	1	1	...	...	20	16	6	4	18	5	15	7	24	4	24	22	39	4	7	1

* Sent back to the garden.

52. The following table gives the nationality and sex of coolies who deserted :

Nationality and sex of deserters.

	Nationality.	Sex.	Number of de-serters.				Total.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
			Act.		Non-Act.				Act labourers.		Non-Act labourers.		Total.	
			1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas...	Men ...	1,792	1,803	2,348	2,136	4,140	3,939	4·26	4·56	5·09	4·31	3·84	3·46
		Women...	641	648	1,707	1,534	2,348	2,182	1·82	1·74	3·56	3·06		
	Behar	Men ...	273	189	528	535	803	744	3·40	4·18	3·48	3·74	4·49	3·76
		Women...	63	71	341	333	404	430	1·20	2·33	2·00	2·06		
	Bengal Proper and Orissa	Men ...	597	455	1,249	1,120	1,846	1,575	5·89	5·23	5·52	4·62	4·47	3·73
		Women...	247	201	1,034	776	1,281	977	2·34	2·19	3·85	2·80		
	North-Western Provinces and Oudh	Men ...	924	830	3,019	2,023	4,310	2,853	9·82	4·55	12·31	7·21	10·27	5·15
		Women...	147	124	2,771	1,582	3,112	1,711	6·59	3·03	8·99	5·23		
	Central Provinces ...	Men ...	1,129	916	893	690	2,022	1,606	9·68	7·00	13·89	8·63	8·67	6·53
		Women...	471	401	550	430	1,021	831	4·52	3·50	9·31	5·01		
	Madras	Men ...	110	101	392	139	502	240	4·40	3·64	14·47	4·94	8·91	3·46
		Women...	49	34	332	101	372	133	2·19	1·57	11·6	3·42		
	Assam	Men ...	77	65	970	905	1,047	973	4·81	4·78	9·83	11·69	7·74	11·06
		Women...	15	15	141	288	159	303	1·27	1·79	4·78	10·26		
	Total	Men ...	4,913	3,820	10,251	7,574	14,865	11,004	5·86	5·15	7·15	5·83	5·15	3·55
		Women...	1,811	1,483	6,986	5,082	8,805	6,565	2·65	2·18	5·5	3·86	4·54	3·39
Grand total		.....	6,432	5,303	17,238	12,666	23,670	17,569	4·38	3·70	6·73	4·88	5·89	4·43

Percentages are not given for desertions of coolies from Nepal (4 males and 12 females), as the total number of coolies of this nationality is very small.

In every case there was, as usual, a larger percentage of men deserters than of women. There was a marked decline in the proportion of deserters among coolies from the North-Western Provinces, Central Provinces, and Madras. The only increase has been among Assamese non-Act labourers. As very few of these are under contract of any sort, their leaving the garden can hardly be properly called desertion.

CHAPTER V.

VITAL STATISTICS AND HEALTH OF GARDEN POPULATION.

53. The following table shows the birth-rate on tea gardens during the past two years:

Birth-rate.

District.	Birth-rate calculated on total garden population.		Birth-rate calculated on adult female population.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	23·6	20·3	76·7	65·3
Sylhet	23·8	19·5	76·7	62·6
Kamrup	33·6	31·6	97·3	90·4
Darrang	19·0	18·7	61·3	59·8
Nowgong	17·2	18·0	53·4	54·1
Sibsagar	25·0	23·7	85·2	80·8
Lakhimpur	26·5	25·0	83·6	78·6
Total	23·9	21·6	77·4	69·9

While the proportion of women to men has increased, the ratio of births to the adult labour population was less than it was in 1897. The birth-rate was no doubt affected by the great unhealthiness of the year 1897, but the fact remains that birth registration is very imperfectly attended to on tea gardens.

Birth-rate according to nationality.

54. The next table distributes the births amongst the different nationalities, and shows the birth-rate among each class calculated on the mean strength of adult females:

	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Assam.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average strength of women under Act I or otherwise.	87,208	12,493	36,769	34,481	19,281	4,992	3,655	199,055
Number of births	6,656	876	2,808	1,684	1,234	335	326	13,923
Birth-rate per 1,000	76·3	70·1	76·3	48·8	64·0	67·1	89·2	69·9
" " " (1897)	80·0	94·6	85·6	69·7	48·5	81·4	77·5	77·4

Births amongst females from Bombay (2) and Nepal (1) are not shown, as the total population of these nationalities is very small.

The birth-rate has declined among labourers of all nationalities, except those from the Central Provinces and natives of Assam.

Death-rate for the year.

55. The statistics of mortality among all classes of the labouring population, including children, for the year and for each half-year separately are given in the table below, with the corresponding figures for the previous year :

District.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children.						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half-year.		Second half-year.		Total.		First half-year.		Second half-year.			
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	2,237	1,542	3,224	1,776	5,461	3,318	17·8	12·2	25·4	14·0	43·2	26·2
Sylhet ...	2,649	2,081	3,695	1,968	6,344	4,049	18·2	14·3	25·2	13·6	43·4	27·9
Kamrup ...	77	70	69	85	146	155	10·5	18·2	17·3	22·2	36·8	40·4
Darrang ...	1,108	1,087	1,132	1,237	2,240	2,324	15·8	15·0	15·5	17·4	31·3	32·4
Nowgong ...	535	427	518	520	1,053	947	25·6	19·5	23·6	24·3	49·2	43·8
Sibsagar ...	2,686	2,228	2,922	2,581	5,608	4,809	19·7	15·2	20·3	17·5	40·0	32·7
Lakhimpur ...	2,218	2,088	3,050	2,327	5,268	4,415	18·9	16·3	24·2	18·0	43·1	34·3
Total ...	11,510	9,523	14,610	10,494	26,120	20,019	18·6	14·8	22·8	16·3	41·4	31·1

The total death-rate for the year was 31·1 per mille as compared with 41·4, in 1897, and 32 and 33·6 in 1896 and 1895, respectively, and was lower than in any previous year. This result must be attributed in part to the measures taken to improve the arrangements for the transit of immigrant coolies, and to the fact that the year was a healthy one in the province generally. It will be seen from the figures given below that the returns of mortality among children at least are always inaccurate, and that the death-rate among adults is still lamentably high, though it shows some improvement over the results of 1897.

Death-rate amongst adults.

56. The following table shows the mortality among both Act and non-Act adult labourers during each of the past two years :

District.	Actual strength of total adult population of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.					
			Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	80,355	79,584	474	248	3,544	2,318	4,018	2,566	86·0	57·1	47·3	30·7	50·0	32·2
Sylhet	88,504	86,632	737	413	3,766	2,589	4,493	3,002	55·3	34·9	46·9	36·8	50·7	34·7
Kamrup	2,748	2,650	43	34	61	76	104	110	72·0	53·1	28·3	37·7	37·8	41·5
Darrang	48,111	46,608	1,630	1,385	247	413	1,877	1,798	55·3	50·4	13·9	21·3	35·0	38·3
Nowgong	14,734	14,878	441	452	314	267	763	729	59·3	58·7	43·5	39·9	51·8	49·6
Sibsagar	85,011	88,816	2,489	2,130	1,408	1,352	3,897	3,482	56·2	47·3	33·7	30·7	45·3	39·1
Lakhimpur	81,958	84,974	2,543	2,066	1,383	1,091	3,930	3,157	54·6	48·1	36·9	27·5	47·0	37·1
Total	402,305	404,146	8,359	6,728	10,723	8,136	19,082	14,864	56·7	47·0	41·9	31·1	47·4	36·7

The proportion of deaths among Act adults was lower than in 1895 and 1897, but higher than in 1896, when it was 45·7 per mille. For an exclusively adult population in a healthy year, the death-rate among Act labourers in 1898 can only be described as excessive. It is principally due to the importation of weakly and anæmic coolies during the famine.

57. The following table gives the recorded causes of death among adult Act coolies during the past two years:

Causes of death among Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1898.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or cachexia of animals.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	1898	6,364	35	45	50	10	85	20	3	248	39·1
	1897	5,578	93	14	125	175	32	25	18	482	86·6
Sylhet	1898	12,079	44	44	62	40	35	79	119	413	34·0
	1897	13,114	140	58	160	84	41	69	205	727	55·3
Kamrup	1898	639	2	3	3	6	9	2	9	34	53·1
	1897	596	5	...	7	13	7	4	7	43	72·0
Darrang	1898	27,453	102	80	306	111	237	178	251	1,385	50·4
	1897	29,467	265	147	403	90	189	225	319	1,638	55·5
Nowgong	1898	7,710	17	13	96	141	65	16	104	452	58·7
	1897	7,598	29	13	80	134	40	7	146	449	59·1
Sibsagar	1898	44,966	234	146	612	178	192	318	506	2,186	47·3
	1897	44,193	434	148	716	122	218	329	522	2,489	56·1
Lakhimpur	1898	45,781	151	101	532	209	368	155	510	2,006	43·5
	1897	36,438	207	253	604	191	300	102	690	2,547	54·6
Total	1898	149,992	585	432	1,721	800	1,001	748	1,501	6,726	44·6
	1897	146,824	1,223	633	2,175	772	827	759	1,907	8,376	56·7
	1896	131,089	858	405	1,259	515	657	647	1,857	5,998	45·7

The total mortality, as well as the number of deaths under every head except coolie anæmia, was less than in 1897. The increase of 154 in deaths from the last named disease occurred principally in the Darrang district and was due to the importation of unsuitable coolies during the famine.

58. The table below shows the recorded causes of death amongst non-Act adult coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death among non-Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of non-Act coolies employed in 1898.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or cachexia of animals.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	1898	75,220	347	375	658	405	561	160	112	2,318	30·8
	1897	74,076	521	273	763	800	578	312	280	3,544	47·8
Sylhet	1898	74,552	278	247	480	452	120	256	766	2,599	34·8
	1897	75,309	264	334	827	570	447	255	1,069	3,766	49·9
Kamrup	1898	2,011	5	3	8	36	7	3	14	76	37·7
	1897	2,151	16	...	7	30	3	2	3	61	28·3
Darrang	1898	19,482	21	79	89	86	68	83	76	413	21·2
	1897	18,704	40	28	47	21	21	24	56	237	13·2
Nowgong	1898	7,168	8	4	33	173	21	30	50	287	30·9
	1897	7,206	6	1	50	173	10	7	39	314	43·5
Sibsagar	1898	43,848	156	135	242	110	81	196	432	1,352	30·7
	1897	41,718	273	92	336	100	92	138	377	1,408	33·7
Lakhimpur	1898	30,103	89	78	218	119	117	80	393	1,094	36·3
	1897	35,529	146	126	322	133	136	134	386	1,383	38·9
Total of 1898	...	261,444	904	919	1,698	1,329	676	759	1,851	8,136	31·1
" " 1897	...	255,313	1,266	864	2,357	1,827	1,297	882	2,230	10,723	41·9

The number of deaths has diminished under every head except diarrhœa, under which head there is a small increase.

59. The following statement shows the causes of death and the death-rate among children (*i.e.*, from birth to sixteen years of age) during each of the past two years :

Death-rate amongst children.

District.	Mean strength of children in 1898.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Total of 1897.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.	
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ankylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.			1898.	1897.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	46,644	137	71	155	115	120	108	46	752	1,443	16·0	31·3
Sylhet	57,818	136	79	131	358	19	35	279	1,037	1,851	17·9	32·2
Kamrup	1,174	4	1	4	18	5	...	13	45	42	38·3	34·7
Darrang	24,639	27	87	77	76	54	57	148	526	363	21·3	15·5
Nowgong	6,727	5	8	29	102	9	13	42	208	290	35·5	41·4
Sibsagar	57,773	52	159	325	281	33	89	388	1,327	1,711	22·9	31·7
Lakhimpur	43,059	35	140	295	256	80	154	298	1,258	1,338	29·2	33·5
Total of 1898	237,834	396	545	1,016	1,206	320	456	1,214	5,153	...	21·6	...
„ „ 1897	227,900	604	503	1,894	1,449	479	519	1,590	7,038	...	...	30·8

The deaths of children recorded for the last five years give the following rates per mille : 1898, 21·6, 1897, 30·8, 1896, 24·3, 1895, 24·9, 1894, 22·7. In view of the manifest inaccuracy of these figures, the Chief Commissioner is unable to draw any inference from them, except that the efforts made with the object of inducing employers to give their attention to the registration of child mortality have failed in their effect.

60. The following statement illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies distributed according to nationality :

Mortality according to country of origin.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Deaths among adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.	
		1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bengal — Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	170,013	177,219	3,656	3,050	41·0	34·2
	Women ..			3,342	3,006		
Bengal — Behar ...	Men ...	27,398	26,708	527	520	35·9	34·5
	Women ...			457	401		
Bengal — Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	71,029	69,333	1,133	970	34·2	28·7
	Women ..			1,304	1,019		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Men ...	72,374	67,604	2,657	1,454	70·2	41·4
	Women ...			2,431	1,342		
Central Provinces ...	Men ...	35,617	40,216	1,660	1,456	83·0	65·0
	Women ...			1,309	1,156		
Madras	Men ...	9,909	10,507	238	164	43·9	31·0
	Women ...			199	162		
Assam	Men ...	15,369	12,520	91	90	11·0	12·4
	Women ...			58	65		
Total	Men ...	208,011	205,391	9,972	7,709	47·9	37·5
	Women ...	194,192	109,055	9,110	7,155	46·9	35·9
Grand total	...	402,203	404,446	19,082	14,864	47·4	36·7

N.B.—The deaths among coolies from Bombay (2 males and 2 females) and Nepal (3 males) are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is small.

The total average death-rate of 46·7 was exceeded in the case of coolies from the North-Western and Central Provinces. The table below shows the death-rate among coolies of these two classes for the past four years:

	Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.			
	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	51·1	45·9	70·2	41·4
Central Provinces	85·9	84·1	83·0	65·0

The mortality among these classes is deplorable, though there are some signs of improvement. It is largely due to the famine, which led to the migration of numbers of sickly and half-starved coolies to Assam.

Proportion of unhealthy gardens.

61. The following statement shows the number and proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district during the last two years. Gardens are classed as unhealthy on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., and the number of deaths from which the average is struck is not less than 10.

District.	Total number of gardens.		Number of unhealthy gardens.		Percentage of unhealthy gardens.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	189	188	29	4	15·3	2·1
Sylhet	137	138	19	7	13·8	5·0
Kamrup	31	30	1	2	3·2	6·6
Darrang	90	91	16	6	17·7	6·5
Nowgong	40	50	7	8	17·5	16·0
Sibsagar	173	168	23	16	13·2	9·5
Lakhimpur	149	150	24	12	16·1	8·0
Total	809	815	119	55	14·7	6·7

Previous to 1889, only those gardens were placed on the unhealthy list which were unhealthy in respect of the total population. For the purpose of comparison, the following table is added, showing the number of unhealthy gardens in each district during the years 1882 to 1898, *i.e.*, since Act I of 1882 came into force, classified according to the method in force before 1889:

District.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Cachar	3	5	9	1	10	7	7	12	1	5	8	3	2	...	2	10	...
Sylhet	...	14	15	18	13	5	4	10	1	3	3	...	...	...	...	5	1
Kamrup	2	2	3	3	...	...	2	1	6	4	5	1	1	1	...	...	...
Darrang	12	14	14	9	8	20	12	10	2	5	12	...	...	3	2	4	...
Nowgong	16	14	16	3	4	1	2	6	2	3	5	5	7	...	1	...	...
Sibsagar	7	11	25	5	15	10	21	13	11	5	14	2	6	2	...	5	...
Lakhimpur	15	13	11	3	14	15	17	12	5	4	8	4	5	5	5	15	7
Total	57	73	93	42	64	49	65	69	28	30	55	14	21	11	10	39	8

As was anticipated in last year's report, the number of unhealthy gardens in 1898 approximates to the figures of 1895 and 1896, and was less than in any previous year.

62. In the following paragraphs a detailed account is given of the gardens which were unhealthy in each district, of the causes of mortality, and of the action taken by the Chief Commissioner in each case.

It should be understood that the figures given in the statements which follow refer only to that portion of the labour force of each garden in respect of which the garden was unhealthy. The death-rate for the year (column 5) is the sum of the death-rates for each half-year taken separately, and calculated on the mean labour force of the half-year.

63. *CACHAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, of causes of unhealthiness.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Majargram	147	14	95·7	...	5	3	1	...	3	2
	2. Burthal	131	12	90·2	2	1	1	...	...	4	4
	3. Katal	89	13	183·4	5	1	1	2	2	1	1
	Total (Act)	367	39	106·2	7	7	5	3	2	8	7
Non-Act population ...	4. Elgin	573	59	81·1	34	2	6	3	...	5	7
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*										

(1) *Majargram.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and had not been unhealthy since 1894. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to call upon the manager to remedy the defects pointed out by the Civil Surgeon. The garden will be again inspected by that officer if it continues to show a high rate of mortality on the returns for the half-year ending the 30th June 1899.

(2) *Burthal.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897 also, and in view of the orders passed in connection with the report for that year a committee was held on it on the 23rd September 1898, but did not arrive at a definite finding. Another committee on this garden will be held shortly, and the Chief Commissioner has decided to await its report.

(3) *Katal.*—This garden also was unhealthy in 1897. The high death-rate in 1898 was due to an epidemic of cholera. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to call upon the manager to remedy certain defects pointed out by the Civil Surgeon. If after the 30th June 1899 the garden shows no sign of improvement, a committee will be appointed to report on it.

(4) *Elgin.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. The Civil Surgeon reports that the high death-rate in 1898 was due to an outbreak of cholera in an epidemic form, and not to any defects in the sanitary arrangements of the estate. The water-supply, however, is not of a satisfactory character. The Deputy Commissioner has been requested to see that the construction of *pucca* wells recommended by the Civil Surgeon is completed without delay.

The following action was taken in 1898 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1897.

Chandowa.—This garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Act. The sanitary arrangements of the garden were found fairly satisfactory, but the Deputy Commissioner has been requested to take steps to ensure that effect is given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendation for the construction of a *pucca* well.

Hasiura or Lalamukh.—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of the Act on the 23rd February 1898. The sanitary arrangements of the garden were found good, and no orders were considered necessary.

64. *SYLHET*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Dysentery.	Diarrhœa.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *cachexia Intermittens.*	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Malnicherra ...	112	11	99·5	...	...	4	4	1	2	...
	2. Kewacherra ...	66	10	148·5	...	4	1	1	1	2	1
	Total (Act) ...	178	21	117·8	...	4	5	5	2	4	1
Non-Act population ...	3. Baramchal ...	679	54	78·4	23	1	3	8	1	8	10
	4. Baitakhal ...	1,280	92	72·0	27	8	17	6	1	...	33
	5. Tilbhoom ...	498	50	99·6	1	17	1	20	...	...	11
	6. Langai	877	72	81·9	10	9	4	24	4	...	21
	7. Adamtila ...	1,083	103	95·0	33	19	3	7	3	...	38
	Total (Non-Act) ...	4,417	371	153·4	94	54	28	65	9	8	113
Act and Non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

The Civil Surgeon's inspection reports on the unhealthy gardens in the district of Sylhet had not been received at the time when this report was sent to Press, and the action taken by the Chief Commissioner with regard to them will, therefore, be recorded in the report for the year 1899.

The following action was taken in 1898 in respect of the gardens noted below, which were unhealthy in 1897:

(*a*) *Malnicherra.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of Act I of 1882, on the 26th June 1898. The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, was instructed to see that effect was given to the recommendations of the Civil Surgeon. As the wages earned by the Act-I coolies on the estate were unduly low, the Deputy Commissioner was asked to consider the desirability of taking action under section 117 of the Act.

(*b*) *Kewacherra.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130, on the 29th August 1898. The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, was instructed to see that effect was given to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations (*i*) for the clearance of jungle, and (*ii*) for the construction of a hospital. The low-lying lines were ordered to be abandoned and new lines constructed on a site to be approved by the Civil Surgeon. The Deputy Commissioner was also requested to consider the desirability of taking action under section 117 of the Act.

(*c*) *Uttarbhag.*—No special action was considered necessary. The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, was requested to see that the Civil Surgeon's recommendations were carried out.

65. *KAMRUP*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cooly or enfeebled constitution.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Amchong ...	293	25	85·7	...	3	3	4	8	...	7
Non-Act population	2. Kamarkuchi ...	118	12	102·8	...	...	...	5	...	...	7
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Amchong.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. As it has now become infected with *kalá-ázár*, the Chief Commissioner has approved the proposal made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that the manager of the garden should be called upon to remove the lines to a new site within six months and have the whole of the old condemned lines burnt down within this period, and that in the event of his failure to do so, the estate should be closed to Act labour. The garden will be inspected again in July 1899, in order to see that the orders have been carried out. Mr. Cotton regrets to report that the European Manager of this garden died last year from *kalá-ázár* and that his successor has also lately succumbed to this fatal malady.

(2) *Kamarkuchi.*—This is a small garden worked wholly by non-Act labour, and appeared in the unhealthy list for the first time in consequence of an epidemic of small-pox. The Civil Surgeon inspected the garden and deputed a vaccinator to attend on the garden for vaccinating unprotected children and adults. No further action was considered necessary.

66. *DARRANG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cooly or enfeebled constitution.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Nahorani ...	617	48	69·6	1	...	18	3	14	3	9
	2. Dolupadang ...	806	126	156·3	11	7	40	1	53	4	10
	3. Barjuli ...	1,492	128	91·4	4	8	55	4	12	5	30
	4. Orangajuli ...	306	24	78·9	13	...	1	2	3	...	5
	5. Rapital ...	132	11	83·3	...	...	1	4	3	1	2
	Total (Act) ...	3,032	337	101·1	29	15	116	14	85	13	65
Non-Act population ...	6. Namgaon ...	632	45	71·2	2	...	10	9	12	5	7
Act and non-Act population taken together	*Nil.*										

(1) *Nahorani.*—This garden has not been on the unhealthy list in recent years. The unhealthiness in 1898 was very largely due to the importation of bad classes of coolies. The Chief Commissioner has directed that the management should be

required to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, and should be warned that if bad coolies continue to be imported, the garden will be closed to Act labour. The Commissioner has also been instructed to call upon the manager to bring up to an adequate strength the labour force, which appeared to be insufficient.

(2) *Dolupadong.*—This garden was unhealthy in the years 1890, 1892, 1893, and 1897. The death-rate in 1898 was 15·63 per cent. among Act labour and 7·79 per cent. among non-Act labour. The high mortality during the past year was due to the importation of sickly and anæmic coolies, and the recruiting arrangements adopted by the management evidently need thorough reorganisation. Under these circumstances, the Chief Commissioner has declared, under section 1,32 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of new Act coolies, and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of labourers under the Act.

(3) *Barjuli.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The unhealthiness in 1898 was due chiefly to the importation of weakly coolies. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has been requested to convey a warning to the management to take greater care in recruiting coolies for the garden, otherwise no consideration will be shown to it on the recurrence of a heavy death-rate.

(4) *Orangajuli.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1896, but healthy in 1897. The mortality in 1898 was principally due to cholera. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that the results for 1899 should be awaited before closing the garden to Act labour; and in the meantime the Manager of the garden has been called upon to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

(5) *Rupital.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897, and under the orders of the Chief Commissioner it has been closed to future importations of labourers under Act I of 1882. The mortality in 1898 was chiefly among new coolies. There have been no deaths, either Act or non-Act, from the 1st January to the 4th May 1899. The sickly coolies had been removed from the garden, and no further action was called for.

(6) *Namgaon.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1891, 1892, 1893, and again in 1898. Anæmia was the chief cause of the large mortality in 1898. The Civil Surgeon's report shows that faulty recruiting arrangements were largely responsible for this unsatisfactory result. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has been instructed to warn the management to take greater care in recruiting coolies for this garden; otherwise it will be closed to all importations under the Act. The registration in this garden is defective, and the manager has been called upon to take steps to improve it.

The Chief Commissioner regrets to have to comment on the recruiting arrangements made by some of the gardens in this district, which are in other respects among the best managed in the province. It is to this cause that he attributes the heavy mortality, especially from anæmia, which might have been avoided if more care had been taken in the selection of labourers.

67. *NOWGONG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Kala-azár.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Nelli	66	11	111·7	...	1	...	1	6	...	4
	2. Haypani	183	16	87·2	...	...	1	5	7	...	3
	3. Sakumbari	197	11	102·0	...	...	1	1	4	1	3
	4. Barghat	616	46	74·6	...	...	6	...	26	1	13
	5. Leagteng	962	71	74·9	3	...	38	...	4	...	30
	6. Diju Valley	566	53	93·6	1	4	5	1	...	4	38
	Total (Act)	2,530	208	82·6	4	4	51	9	43	6	91
Non-Act population.	7. Kondali	646	47	72·6	2	...	...	17	18	3	7
	8. Rengbeng	236	30	127·1	...	...	2	3	25	...	...
	Total (non-Act) ...	882	77	87·2	2	...	2	20	43	3	7
Act and non-Act taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Nelli.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1891, 1896, and 1897; the main cause of mortality was *kalá-ázár*. From the Civil Surgeon's report it appears that the garden is not unsuited to any class of labourers, and the mortality does not appear to have been caused by neglect of sanitary measures. No special action was considered necessary.

(2) *Barpani.*—This garden was on the unhealthy list in 1895, but was healthy in 1896. It was again unhealthy in 1897; much of the mortality on this estate appears to have been due to *kalá-ázár*. The management has changed hands, and from the Civil Surgeon's inspection report it appears that the manager was alive to the necessity for improving the health of his labour force. The Chief Commissioner has, therefore, accepted the suggestion made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, to await the results for 1899 before issue of further orders.

(3) *Sakunbari.*—This garden has been unhealthy for the last two years (in 1897 on non-Act population and in 1898 on Act population). The sanitary condition of the garden, as disclosed in the Civil Surgeon's inspection report, was satisfactory, and the garden appears to have been well managed. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, has accepted the Commissioner's proposal to await the results for 1899.

(4) *Barghat.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1896 on non-Act population and again in 1898 on Act population. The unhealthiness was chiefly due to *kalá-ázár*. The management seems to be doing its best to improve matters. No special action was considered necessary.

(5) *Lengteng.*—This garden was on the unhealthy list for the first time in 1898. No special action was considered necessary.

(6) *Diju Valley.*—This garden was unhealthy on Act population in 1896 and again in 1898; but as it is usually healthy, the Chief Commissioner has refrained from closing it at once to Act labour, and has asked the Commissioner to warn the manager that if he fails to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, or if the garden continues to be unhealthy, there will be no hesitation in closing it to Act labour.

(7) *Kondali.*—This garden, which is ordinarily a healthy one, came on the unhealthy list for the year 1898, owing chiefly to an epidemic of *kalá-ázár* among the non-Act population. No special action was considered necessary.

(8) *Rengbeng.*—This garden is worked entirely by non-Act coolies. It was unhealthy in 1897. *Kalá-ázár* was the main cause of its unhealthiness in both years. No special action was considered necessary.

68. *SIBSAGAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ankylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Jaboka ...	1,237	101	81·6	11	4	35	13	6	14	18
	2. Soffrai ...	1,234	116	94·1	19	8	31	2	26	28	12
	3. Rajabari (Rajabari Tea Company).	149	15	100·3	8	...	3	...	1	2	1
	4. Tingalibam ...	350	47	132·5	...	9	24	2	...	3	9
	5. Holonguri ...	328	28	84·9	...	3	17	1	...	2	5
	6. Hilika ...	703	66	93·8	...	5	18	3	30	2	8
	7. Dhooli ...	184	17	92·4	1	4	7	...	...	...	5
	8. Banderasilla ...	176	18	111·8	...	...	13	...	...	...	5
	9. Rangajan ...	174	16	91·5	1	...	5	...	...	2	8
	10. Chotajan ...	164	13	79·0	3	...	3	...	...	2	1
	11. Mokrang ...	98	17	172·4	1	...	10	...	...	1	5
	12. Latabari ...	144	15	108·7	...	2	8	1	1	...	3
	Total (Act) ...	4,937	469	94·9	46	35	166	22	64	56	80
Non-Act population	13. Towkak ...	721	85	117·7	2	10	34	2	1	45	21
	14. Rajdhari(Lakwa) ...	369	28	75·9	...	1	15	1	...	2	9
	15. Gohrajarhat ...	453	33	70·3	1	1	1	14	...	1	14
	16. Nagadhuli ...	554	38	70·7	4	4	15	5	...	...	10
	Total (Non-Act) ...	2,097	183	87·2	7	16	65	22	1	48	54
Act and non-Act taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Jaboka.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1897. The unhealthiness in 1898 was chiefly due to diarrhœa and dysentery. From the Civil Surgeon's report it appeared that there had not been any want of precaution on the part of the management. No action was called for.

(2) *Suffrai.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and appears to be well managed. The Chief Commissioner has decided to await the result of 1899 before taking any coercive action.

(4) *Tingalibam.*—This garden has not been on the unhealthy list before. The Chief Commissioner has therefore accepted the proposal made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, to await the results of 1899 before taking any further action.

(5) *Holunguri.*—The unhealthiness in 1898 was chiefly due to the importation of unsuitable coolies during 1897. The manager is reported to have taken measures to put a stop to the importation of coolies of bad physique. No special action was considered necessary.

(6) *Hilika.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1897. The Civil Surgeon's previous recommendations have all been carried out, and the health of the garden is improving. No special action was considered necessary. This is another garden in which it is evident that there must have been much neglect in the selection of proper labour.

(7) *Dhooli.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897. The lines and water-supply are being improved, as recommended by the Civil Surgeon at the last inspection. No special action was required.

(8) *Bandersulia.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1893, 1894, and 1895 chiefly owing to bad importations, in consequence of which the manager was warned. The Chief Commissioner has directed that the manager should again be warned that, if the garden is unhealthy in 1899, it will be closed to Act labour.

(9) *Rangajan.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897. From the Civil Surgeon's report it appears that the garden is improving. The Chief Commissioner has therefore approved the proposal of the Commissioner, that the results for 1899 should be awaited before any action is taken.

(11) *Makrang.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden. The fact of its being on the unhealthy list in 1898 seems to have been accidental, the death-rate being calculated on a small number of Act labourers. No special action was called for.

(13) *Towkak.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1897. From the Civil Surgeon's inspection report it appears that the condition of the garden is improving. No special action was considered necessary.

(14) *Rajabari (Lakwa).*—This garden was unhealthy in 1896. The unhealthiness in 1898 was chiefly due to bowel complaints, apparently caused by drinking impure water. The Commissioner has been requested to call upon the manager to arrange for the efficient protection of the well from which drinking-water is supplied.

(15) *Gabruparbat.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897. The Civil Surgeon reports that it is well managed, and considers that the unhealthiness in 1898 was not due to any fault on the part of the management. No special action was called for.

(16) *Nagadhuli.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1897. The Chief Commissioner agreed with the opinion expressed by the Commissioner that no action was called for.

The following action was taken in 1898 in respect of the gardens mentioned below which were unhealthy in 1897:

(*a*) *Sapakati.*—The Commissioner was requested to see that the defects in the water-supply, as pointed out by the Civil Surgeon, were remedied.

(*b*) *Khumtai.*—The Civil Surgeon's report did not disclose any serious defect in the arrangements on the garden. The Chief Commissioner accepted the recommendation of the Commissioner to postpone orders until after the next inspection.

(*c*) *Oating.*—The manager was called upon to remedy the defects in the water-supply.

(*d*) *Missamara.*—The manager was directed to carry out the recommendations of the Civil Surgeon.

(*e*) *Ghilladhari.*—The high mortality was chiefly due to importation from the famine districts. Orders were postponed till the next inspection.

No orders were considered necessary in the case of the following gardens:—Dufflating, Mohima, Badlipar, Dehingapar, Nagiujan, Saraipani, Khanikar, Kaliapani, Barhala, Kathalguri, and Lukuah.

69. *LAKHIMPUR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of estate.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, cachexia or dropsy/abdominalis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Hukanpukri	280	25	89·3	2	10	...	4	3	1	5
	2. Bordobi	84	15	178·7	5	...	8	...	...	...	1
	3. Dekajuli	202	16	83·3	...	3	10	2	...	...	1
	4. Chota Boggpara ...	121	10	146·9	...	...	5	...	3	1	1
	5. Makum	1,060	100	73·3	4	1	66	7	5	8	15
	6. Namrup	274	32	78·8	6	2	10	1	1	1	11
	7. Oaklands	222	19	84·0	...	1	1	...	10	...	7
	Total (Act)	2,398	279	82·8	18	17	100	14	21	12	48
Non-Act population	8. Limbuguri	53	10	118·6	...	2	4	2	...	2	...
	9. Dighaltarang ...	702	84	79·2	1	2	...	...	...	2	9
	10. Deomoli	266	32	199·5	2	2	19	6	1	1*	...
	11. Tara	731	131	97·8	5	1	8	2	3	1	...
	Total (Non-Act) ...	742	74	91·4	8	7	31	10	4	16	9
Act and non-Act populations taken together.	12. Mohanbari	372	21	56·3	0	2	5	1	5	...	3

(1) *Hukanpukri.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1897. The high death-rate in 1898 was largely due to the importation of new coolies from the Central Provinces. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the finding of the Civil Surgeon, and has declared under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act that the garden is unfit for the residence of new coolies from the Central Provinces, and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of such labourers under the Act.

(2) *Bordobi.*—This is a new garden opened in February 1898. The excessive mortality was partially due to an epidemic of cholera. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has called upon the management to give effect to the recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the proposal made by the Commissioner, that the results for the year 1899 should be awaited, and that the management should be warned that it will receive no consideration from Government if it fails to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations and the garden continues to be unhealthy.

(3) *Dekajuli.*—This is a new garden, which was also unhealthy in 1897. On the report made by the Civil Surgeon in that year, the Chief Commissioner deferred taking further action pending the receipt of a second report. The Civil Surgeon inspected the garden again on the 19th December 1898, and the Chief Commissioner then decided to give the garden another chance and postponed orders till the next inspection report should be received. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 24th February 1899. The high mortality in 1898 was due to bowel complaints caused by drinking impure water. The Chief Commissioner has declared under section 132 of the Act that the garden is unfit for the residence of new Act coolies, and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of Act labour.

(5) *Makum.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1892, 1893, and 1895. The high death-rate in 1898 was partly due to the importation of bad classes of coolies and partly to bowel complaints caused by drinking impure water. The Chief Commissioner has accepted the suggestion of the Commissioner and has declared under section 132 of the Act that the garden is unfit for the residence of new coolies from the Central Provinces; and has directed that it shall be closed to future importations of such labourers under the Act. The Commissioner has also been requested to warn the manager that if he continues to import physically unfit coolies, or if he fails to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, the garden will be closed altogether to Act labour on its next appearance on the unhealthy list.

(6) *Namrup.*—The death-rate on this garden has been very high for two years in succession, and the number of desertions was also large. The garden has not yet been provided with a proper water-supply. The Chief Commissioner has, therefore, accepted the suggestion made by the Commissioner and declared the garden unfit for the residence of new Act coolies, and has directed that it shall be closed to all future importations of such labour.

(7) *Oaklands.*—This garden was also unhealthy on Act population in 1897. The registration of deaths appeared to be defective. The Chief Commissioner accepted the view of the Commissioner that it would suffice to insist on the manager carrying out the recommendations of the Civil Surgeon, and a warning was given to the manager that the garden would be closed at once to all Act labour if it should again appear that the deaths were not properly registered.

(8) *Limbuguri.*—This is a new garden and was unhealthy on non-Act population. As the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has called upon the manager to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, the Chief Commissioner agreed with the Commissioner that no further action was necessary.

(9) *Dighultarang.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897 also. It has improved considerably, and its management appears to be satisfactory. The Commissioner has been requested to call upon the manager to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

(10) *Deomuli.*—This is a new garden, which was unhealthy for the first time in 1898. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has requested the manager to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations, and the Chief Commissioner has decided to await the results of the Deputy Commissioner's action before taking any steps.

(11) *Tara.*—This is a new garden which was unhealthy for the first time in 1898. The Chief Commissioner considered that no special action was called for.

(12) *Mohanbari.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has asked the manager to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations. No special action was considered necessary.

The following action was taken in 1898 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1897:

(*a*) *Khamptigoali.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon under section 130 of Act I of 1882 on the 20th July 1898. No further action beyond requiring the manager to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations was considered necessary.

(*b*) *Dijoo.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon, under section 130 of Act I of 1882, on the 3rd August 1898. The Chief Commissioner agreed with the Commissioner that the garden was unfit for the residence of all new coolies under Act I of 1882, and directed the closure of the garden to all new importations of Act labour for the present.

(*c*) *Dinjan.*—The manager was called upon to give effect to the recommendations of the Civil Surgeon to increase the labour force and to hold a weekly parade of the children.

(*d*) *Kodom.*—No special action was considered necessary beyond requiring the manager to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

(*e*) *Pathalipam.*—No action was considered necessary.

The Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to report that the large labour establishments employed by the Assam Railways and Trading Company were remarkably healthy during the year, and that these settlements, which formerly used to be among the most unhealthy in the province, now leave little to be desired. He attributes this result partly to the clearance of jungle in the neighbourhood of the lines, and partly to the improvements effected in the water-supply and to the increased attention paid to the welfare of the labour force. A Labour Superintendent has lately been appointed, and the Chief Commissioner is confident that this step will tend to increase the value of the Company's property.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPECTION.

Number of gardens liable to inspection.

70. The number of gardens borne on the inspection register at the end of the year was 858, against 852 in 1897.

There was an increase in every district, except Kamrup and Sibsagar. In Nowgong, one garden was abandoned. In Sibsagar, one small garden was amalgamated with another, six were struck off the list because they had less than 50 coolies, one was closed, and three new gardens were opened.

Classification of gardens according to the coolies employed and inspection of Act and non-Act gardens.

71. The following statement shows the number of gardens classified, district by district, according to the classes of labourers employed, the number which submitted returns, and the number which were inspected during the year:

	Cachar.					Sylhet.					Kamrup.					Darrang.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.			
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number of gardens ...	104	82	2	42	230	72	63	4	...	139	8	6	2	14	30	83	4	3	1	91
,, sending returns 50 and 51.	104	82	2	...	188	72	63	3	...	138	8	6	2	...	16	83	4	3	...	90
,, inspected once ...	95	62	2	...	159	65	59	1	...	125	7	6	...	...	13	64	4	...	...	68
,, ,, twice ...	8	20	...	...	28	7	4	1	...	*12	1	...	...	...	1	16	...	...	...	16
,, ,, thrice ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
,, ,, four times	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total number inspected in 1898.	104	82	2	...	188	72	63	2	...	137	8	6	...	...	14	80	4	...	...	84
,, 1897. ,, ,, in	104	83	2	...	189	77	58	1	...	136	8	8	1	...	17	70	5	...	...	75

	Nowgong.					Sibsagar.					Lakhimpur.					Total.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.				Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act.			
		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.		Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
Number of gardens ...	30	10	...	10	50	143	16	...	10	168	128	9	1	12	150	867	190	12	89	858
,, sending returns 50 and 51.	30	10	...	...	40	142	16	...	...	158	128	9	1	...	138	867	190	11	...	768
,, inspected once ...	18	10	...	...	28	139	16	...	...	155	84	8	1	...	93	472	165	4	...	641
,, ,, twice ...	11	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	...	...	26	1	...	...	27	69	23	1	...	95
,, ,, thrice ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	4	5	...	...	...	5
,, ,, four times	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Total number inspected in 1898.	30	10	...	...	40	139	16	...	...	155	114	9	1	...	124	547	190	5	...	742
,, 1897. ,, ,, in	30	9	...	...	39	135	17	...	...	152	123	7	1	...	131	547	187	5	...	739

* One garden was inspected a second time for verification of contracts, 9 being unhealthy were inspected twice, and 2 gardens were inspected a second time to ascertain the reasons of desertions.

All gardens employing Act coolies and those employing over 50 other coolies are required to furnish returns. Returns were submitted by 768 gardens, 11 of which employed less than 50 coolies.

Inspection.

72. Of the 757 gardens liable to inspection, 737 were inspected during the year. The gardens which were not inspected were thus distributed—3 in Darrang, 3 in Sibsagar, and 14 in Lakhimpur. The gardens in Lakhimpur had been reserved by the late Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Duncan, for inspection by himself just before the close of the year, and remained uninspected owing to his death. All these gardens have, however, been since inspected.

Gardens inspected twice or oftener.

73. One hundred and one gardens were inspected twice or oftener as compared with 78 in 1899 and 72 in 1896. The Old Salona tea garden in Nowgong was inspected four times, two of the inspections being made for the purpose of enquiring into a case of wholesale desertion from the garden.

74. The following table shows the number of gardens inspected, respectively, by Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Civil Surgeons, and other inspecting agency:

District.	Deputy Commissioners.		Assistant Commissioners.		Civil Surgeons.		Other inspecting agency.	
	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	75	25	81	43	4	40	29	70
Sylhet	8	10	103	115	6	17	22	4
Kamrup	8	12	4	...	5	2	...	...
Darrang	31	11	15	26	6	19	23	28
Nowgong	9	27	...	...	40	24	...	3
Sibsagar	32	38	109	88	15	28	8	1
Lakhimpur	33*	29†	37‡	31	46§	52	54‖	52
Total	196	152	349	303	122	182	136	158

* This includes 2 joint inspections by the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon.

† Ditto 5 ditto ditto ditto.

‡ Ditto 7 inspections for verification of contracts and examination of vital statistics.

§ Ditto 15 ditto ditto and other purposes.

‖ Ditto 7 ditto ditto ditto.

The preceding year having been a very unhealthy one, there was a large number of gardens on the unhealthy list, and consequently a considerable increase in the number of inspections made by Civil Surgeons and a decrease in the number made by Deputy and Assistant Commissioners.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING OF THE SYSTEM GENERALLY.

Relations between employers and labourers.

75. The relations between employers and labourers were fairly satisfactory. In about a dozen cases disagreement between some of the coolies and the garden management resulted in criminal prosecutions, the cause of the quarrel being generally irregularity in payment of coolies, insisting on their going out to work when they were unwilling, or insult, real or fancied, offered by one of the managers or assistants to some influential coolie or sardar.

Two riots of a somewhat serious character occurred at the Kellyden estate in Nowgong and the Talap estate in Lakhimpur. In the former case the manager and his assistant, when attempting to turn the coolies out to work after three days' holiday given for the *Holi* festival, encountered opposition, and on the assistant taking a woman by the hand to induce her to go to work, a number of coolies attacked him and the manager with sticks, while one man made a dangerous assault on the manager with a hoe. The labour force were in a dangerously excited state for two or three days, the police, who were called in, being at first not strong enough to restore order. Twelve of the ringleaders in the disturbance were subsequently convicted by the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong and sentenced to terms of from three months' to two years' rigorous imprisonment. In the Talap case a sardar of long standing, who had been abused by one of the assistant managers, incited the coolies to make an attack on the manager and his three assistants. The manager had his arm broken and sustained other injuries. The sardar who had got up the disturbance was sentenced to nine months' and three of the other coolies to terms of from two to six months' rigorous imprisonment. In a third case, which occurred on the Baisahali garden in Sibsagar, the assistant manager, who had assaulted an old sardar, was attacked by the sardar's son, assisted by a large number of coolies, and received a severe beating. Eight men were sent up for trial, of whom three were sentenced to one year, three to nine months' and two to six months' rigorous imprisonment.

In the Darrang district there was no serious rioting or unlawful assembly during the year.

A case of a very unusual description occurred at the Chapanulla garden in Nowgong district: A coolie who had absconded was arrested and brought back to work on the garden. He worked for two days, and, on returning from work on the second day, attacked with an axe the *hasira* muharrir and the cook in the office, wounding them both. He then went to the bungalow and killed the assistant manager, a native. He was then captured, and, on trial at the sessions, was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

Relations between the garden population and the villagers.

76. No case of friction between the garden population and the neighbouring villagers was reported during the year.

General condition of labourers.

77. The general condition of the labourers continues to be satisfactory on the whole. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar remarks:

> They are better off in most cases than they would be in their own homes, and there is no doubt that a coolie who is industrious, strong, and healthy, cannot only support himself and his family comfortably, but can save money, as is often done, and finally set up as a peasant proprietor.

78. The average number of adult coolies per 100 acres of tea has declined from 125 in 1896 and 129 in 1897 to 124 in 1898. The average number every year since 1882 is shown in the statement below:

Year.	Area under tea cultivation. Acres.	Total adult labour force (annual mean), Act and non-Act.	Number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea.
1882	178,851	131,405	73
1883	189,453	153,739	81
1884	189,852	177,622	93
1885	197,510	188,262	95
1886	203,903	192,076	94
1887	211,079	203,023	96
1888	216,676	219,861	101
1889	227,249	241,297	106
1890	231,038	250,113	108
1891	241,823	265,315	109
1892	247,192	283,819	114
1893	254,126	302,558	119
1894	268,796	310,767	115
1895	276,014	334,298	121
1896	291,909	366,460	125
1897	310,550	402,205	129
1898	325,813	404,446	124

79. The following table shows the area of Government land taken up by time-expired coolies during the past two years, and also in 1880, 1885, and 1890:

Settlement of time-expired labourers on the land.

District.	Area settled direct with time-expired coolies in 1880.	1885.	1890.	1897.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cachar	1,467	423	7,133	11,748	12,013
Sylhet	...*	83	300	246	257
Kamrup	56	14	42	211	244
Darrang	1,254	3,063	7,454	16,327	17,780
Nowgong	77	520	1,895	5,891	5,409
Sibsagar	990	1,856	10,639	17,763	19,700
Lakhimpur	740	2,237	4,897	15,737	17,294
Total	4,584	8,196	32,360	67,923	72,697

* Information not available.

As has been previously explained, this statement does not show the whole amount of land settled with coolies, as it excludes the considerable area rented from private owners. So far as they go, however, the figures indicate an increasing tendency on the part of coolies to settle down as cultivators in the province.

80. The following statement gives details of time-expired garden coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in the several districts in the province:

Time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.

District.	Number of time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.	Nature of disease. Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Anæmia cachexia and dropsy.	Other causes.	Total.	Number of days treated.	Average period of detention, in days.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	193	...	18	34	60	37	44	193	5,169	26·7
Sylhet	294	2	25	75	79	48	65	294	4,065	13·8
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	70	...	8	6	17	3	36	70	2,375	33·9
Nowgong	42	...	1	4	12	15	10	42	2,383	56·7
Sibsagar	246	2	14	31	30	29	140	246	4,200	17·0
Lakhimpur	544	1	35	66	111	82	249	544	8,343	15·3
Total of 1898	1,389	5	101	216	309	214	544	1,389	26,535	19·1
,, 1897	1,300	13	171	221	284	258	353	1,300	13,194	10·1

The increase in the number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients at dispensaries from 746 in 1896 to 1,300 in 1897 was attributed to the exceptional unhealthiness of the latter year. In the year 1898, which was a healthy one, there was a further increase to 1,359, but this is entirely accounted for by the statistics of the district of Lakhimpur, where, in former years, only those coolies who came direct from tea-gardens with discharge certificates were returned under this head, whereas all time-expired Act coolies received as in-patients have now been shown, the result being an increase from 75 to 514 in the figures of this district. On the other hand, the districts of Cachar and Sylhet show a decrease, owing to the exclusion of sick and destitute coolies treated at the shelters of which particulars are given in the next paragraph.

Sick and destitute coolies.

81. During the year four shelters for sick and destitute coolies, attached to dispensaries were maintained in Cachar, and eight in Sylhet, and, in addition to these, three shelters for able-bodied vagrant coolies were kept up in the Habiganj subdivision of the latter district. The total number of persons relieved at these shelters was 674, *viz.*, 355 in Cachar and 319 in Sylhet. Of these, 631 were ex-tea-garden coolies, 34 were people who had been employed on the Railway, and 9 other vagrants. Out of 626 coolies who were received at the dispensary shelters, 242 were discharged after recovery, 169 died, 186 left before recovery, and 29 remained under treatment at the close of the year. The very heavy mortality among these unfortunates, amounting to 27 per cent., is the result of the enfeebled condition in which they were received at the shelters. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar reports with regard to the coolies relieved at the shelters in his district:

> These were persons able, when well, to earn their own living, but who were found in a state of destitution and in bad health, although not suffering from any disease that would justify their being admitted to the charitable dispensary. What they required chiefly was shelter and good food, which they received in the poor-house, till they were sufficiently strong to earn their own living when they were discharged.

Having regard to the extremely heavy rate of mortality, which shows that many of these waifs and strays must have been received in a moribund condition, the Chief Commissioner considers that the Deputy Commissioner's view is unduly optimistic, and that it would probably have been better if a larger proportion of these coolies had been admitted into hospital. Of the number discharged from the shelters 14 only were returned to tea-gardens, *viz.*, 10 in Cachar, who were all coolies under Act-I agreements, who had deserted during the currency of their contracts, and 4 in Sylhet. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar reports that he has been unable to trace any case of a worn-out or sickly coolie being turned out of a garden.

Twenty persons were repatriated from the shelters, *viz.*, 15 from Cachar and 5 from Sylhet.

The shelters in the Cachar district were occupied, as a rule, for a short time only, the average period of detention being at Silchar 2 days, at Hailakandi and Katigora 3 days, and at Lakhipur 15 days. It is explained that the comparatively long average detention at Lakhipur was due to one case, that of a destitute old woman who remained in the shelter from July 1898 to the end of the year, as she could not be otherwise provided for. On the whole, the assistance afforded by the shelters in Cachar appears to have been little, if at all, abused. This is not so clear in the case of Sylhet, where the average period of detention at dispensary shelters was 21·92 days and at the three shelters for able-bodied vagrants 20·33 days.

The total expenditure incurred in connection with the shelters during the year was Rs. 4,883-1-9, distributed as follows:

	Cachar.	Sylhet.	Total.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Buildings and repairs ...	805 15 7	509 0 0	1,314 15 7
Diet	1,923 0 2	1,029 3 6	2,953 3 8
Repatriation ...	339 15 6	196 1 6	536 1 0
Miscellaneous	.....	79 13 6	79 13 6
Total	3,068 15 3	1,814 2 6	4,883 1 9

The average cost incurred in respect of each pauper, excluding cost of repatriation, was Rs. 6-7-2. The average in Cachar was Rs. 7-11 and in Sylhet Rs. 5-8-7, in respect of paupers treated in dispensary shelters, and Rs. 3-5-4 in respect of other vagrants. The daily average cost of diet varied in Cachar district from 2 annas to 2 annas 9 pies per head and in Sylhet from 1 anna 2 pies to 4 annas.

On the whole, it is probable that the system of providing shelters for sick and destitute vagrant coolies in the Surma Valley, which was inaugurated in 1897, has been successful in relieving a considerable amount of distress, and the Chief Commissioner has no hesitation in deciding that it shall remain in operation for the present. It may be expected that with further experience the working of the system will improve.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

82. The statement below shows the receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1898-99:

Receipts.				Expenditure.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Medical.				Salaries of depôt establishment (including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, compounders and dressers, clerks and menials, etc.) ...	13,244 2 2	2,129 10 4	15,373 12 6
Contractors' license-fees under section 13	2,016 8 0	100 0 0	2,116 8 0				
Recruiters' license-fees under section 24	...	324 0 0	324 0 0	Supplies and services (including diet of patients, value of medical stores, clothing, bedding, value of medical st. res, purchase of country medicine, expenses during the prevalence of epidemics, and petty construction and repairs)	27,489 5 0	1,557 10 6	10,046 15 6
Registration fees under sections 35 and 68	...	10,533 0 0	10,533 0 0				
Rates under section 109 ...	67,421 11 0	...	67,421 11 0	Contingent charges ...	3,841 10 3	446 13 5	4,288 7 7
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	5,852 7 11	...	5,852 7 11	Grants to dispensaries ...	5,065 0 0	...	5,065 0 0
Fees for labour under sections 112 and 112B	5,975 0 0	...	5,975 0 0	Inspectors, Embarkation Agent and other officers...	4,800 0 0	17,473 4 5	22,273 4 5
Medical examination fees ...	296 0 0	...	296 0 0	Clerks and servants ...	9,427 7 0	5,275 0 9	14,692 7 9
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	1,135 4 3	...	1,135 4 3	Travelling allowance, etc....	7,772 8 3	1,351 10 10	9,084 3 0
Fines and miscellaneous ...	459 9 10	...	459 9 10	Miscellaneous (including rents, percentage of treasury and audit establishment, refund, pensions)...	5,747 1 6	3,062 4 11	8,809 6 5
Diet, etc., charges recovered...	3,398 3 10	...	3,398 3 10				
Fees for license of immigrants under section 90 ...	...	1,050 0 0	1,050 0 0	Fees for inspecting tea-gardens	8,989 0 0	...	8,989 0 0
Miscellaneous	...	9 13 8	9 13 8	Repatriation charges ...	2,120 2 1	...	2,120 2 1
Advances	455 12 6	...	455 12 6	Advances	867 12 0	...	867 12 0
				Deficiency (excess of payments over receipts of Inland Labour Transport Fund)	10,279 9 4	—10,279 9 4	
Total	85,740 9 4	12,016 13 8	97,757 7 0	Total	98,573 9 5	12,016 13 8	2,10,590 7 1
Opening balance	1,22,694 1 3	...	1,22,694 1 3	Closing balance ...	1,09,861 1 2	...	1,09,861 1 2
Grand total	2,08,434 10 7	...	2,20,451 8 3	Grand total	2,08,434 10 7	...	2,20,451 8 3

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. J. MONAHAN,

Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Shillong,

The 29th July 1899.

STATEMENT.

Return showing Statistics of the Labour Force of the

Classes of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of the year.	Additions				
		Imported.				
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contracts under section 11.	Number giving contracts under section 12.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar — Act-I labourers (adults)	4,027	440	371	...	72	54
Non-Act labourers — adults	73,981	...	...	3,104	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	46,265	...	...	1,071	...	...
Total	1,25,173	440	371	4,175	72	54
Sylhet — Act-I labourers (adults)	12,833	314	675	...	4,447	885
Non-Act labourers — adults	73,267	...	...	6,640	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	57,383	...	...	2,792	...	...
Total	143,483	314	675	9,432	4,447	885
Surma Valley — Act-I labourers (adults)	17,760	754	1,046	...	4,519	939
Non-Act labourers — adults	147,248	...	...	9,744	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	103,648	...	...	3,863	...	...
Total	268,656	754	1,046	13,607	4,519	939
Kamrup — Act-I labourers (adults)	593	102	121	...	4	...
Non-Act labourers — adults	1,781	...	...	56	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	1,202	...	...	104	...	...
Total	3,776	102	121	160	4	...
Darrang — Act-I labourers (adults)	29,110	1,801	2,242	...	3,248	1,750
Non-Act labourers — adults	18,140	...	...	416	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	24,035	...	...	1,578	...	...
Total	71,284	1,801	2,242	1,994	3,248	1,750
Nowgong — Act-I labourers (adults)	7,810	533	646	...	521	98
Non-Act labourers — adults	6,638	...	...	267	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	6,741	...	...	565	...	...
Total	21,189	533	646	832	521	98
Sibsagar — Act-I labourers (adults)	45,739	2,099	4,802	...	1,975	6,566
Non-Act labourers — adults	41,615	...	...	1,043	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	55,666	...	...	3,928	...	...
Total	142,060	2,099	4,802	4,971	1,975	6,566
Lakhimpur — Act-I labourers (adults)	47,181	5,270	3,223	...	3,404	5,713
Non-Act labourers — adults	36,161	...	...	1,351	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	41,601	...	...	3,615	...	...
Total	124,943	5,270	3,223	4,966	3,404	5,713
Brahmaputra Valley — Act-I labourers (adults)	130,432	9,805	11,034	...	9,152	14,127
Non-Act labourers — adults	104,535	...	...	3,133	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	129,185	...	...	9,790	...	...
Total	364,152	9,805	11,034	12,923	9,152	14,127
Total for the Province — Act-I labourers (adults)	148,102	10,559	13,080	...	13,671	15,066
Non-Act labourers — adults	251,783	...	...	12,877	...	...
Non-Act labourers — children	232,833	...	...	13,653	...	...
Grand total	632,808	10,559	13,080	26,530	13,671	15,066

Tea Gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1898.

made during the year 1898.								Deductions made during the year 1898.			
Otherwise than by importations.										Deaths.	
Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.	Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	First-half year.	Second-half year.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
185 1,488 345	... 48 ...	... 2,763 ...	... 4,069 302	 2,565	... 1,237 ...	1,170 12,661 4,253	6,097 86,042 50,538	240 3,172 568	... 3,036 312	121 1,090 331	127 1,228 421
2,018	48	2,763	4,371	2,565	1,237	18,114	143,287	3,920	3,348	1,542	1,776
241 1,408 371	48 ...	... 5,602 ...	... 3,178 724	 2,827	... 1,128 ...	6,610 17,936 6,944	19,443 91,273 64,497	271 801 329	... 4,864 1,696	232 1,344 505	181 1,255 532
2,220	48	5,602	3,902	2,827	1,128	31,480	174,963	1,401	6,560	2,081	1,968
426 2,896 916	96	... 8,365 ...	... 7,247 1,026	 5,392	... 2,365 ...	7,780 30,617 11,197	25,549 177,165 114,245	311 3,973 837	... 7,900 2,208	353 2,434 836	308 2,483 933
4,238	96	8,365	8,273	5,392	2,365	49,594	316,250	5,321	10,108	3,623	3,724
2 15 2	2	... 104 ...	... 667 144	 121	... 67 ...	231 819 371	824 2,830 1,573	2 2 1	... 487 151	13 36 19	2 38 26
19	2	104	751	121	67	1,451	5,227	5	638	70	85
441 116 27	186	... 7,934 ...	... 3,789 859	 1,340	... 376 ...	9,668 12,631 3,204	38,777 29,771 27,239	441 116 27	... 6,060 667	626 200 261	759 213 265
584	186	7,934	4,648	1,340	376	25,503	96,787	584	6,727	1,087	1,237
467 200 372	3	... 898 ...	... 1,174 30	 390	... 414 ...	2,270 2,953 1,337	10,080 9,591 8,008	468 192 370	... 2,190 345	196 134 97	256 153 111
1,039	5	898	1,204	390	414	6,560	27,769	1,030	2,735	427	520
1,082 531 739	100	... 10,194 ...	... 3,691 327	 3,476	... 1,178 ...	16,614 16,637 8,461	62,363 38,253 64,067	1,082 532 727	... 5,664 1,919	990 660 572	1,140 686 755
2,343	100	10,194	4,018	3,476	1,178	41,722	184,682	2,341	7,583	2,218	2,581
485 352 235	170	... 12,418 ...	... 2,452 450	 3,204	... 1,361 ...	18,265 17,941 7,504	65,446 54,102 49,165	459 312 221	... 6,205 2,314	1,020 570 488	1,046 511 770
1,072	170	12,418	2,909	3,204	1,361	43,710	168,653	992	8,519	2,088	2,327
2,477 1,214 1,366	463	... 31,548 ...	... 11,720 1,210	 8,531	... 3,396 ...	47,058 51,011 20,897	177,490 155,546 150,082	2,452 1,154 1,346	... 20,606 5,396	2,845 1,618 1,437	3,022 1,601 1,927
5,057	463	31,548	12,930	8,531	3,396	118,966	483,118	4,952	26,202	5,900	6,750
2,903 4,110 2,282	559	... 39,913 ...	18,967 2,236	 13,923	... 5,761 ...	54,838 81,628 34,094	203,630 331,411 204,927	2,963 5,127 2,183	... 28,506 7,804	3,196 4,052 2,273	3,530 4,054 2,886
9,295	559	39,913	21,203	13,923	5,761	168,560	801,368	10,273	36,310	9,521	10,414

Return showing Statistics of the Labour Force of the Tea gardens

Classes of labourers.	Deserters.		By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under section 111.	Number giving agreements under section 112.	Deductions made during: Cancelment under section 11A.	Cancelment under sections 11(b), 13(3), 14(1), 14(2), or 17.
	First-half year.	Second-half year.					
a	19		20	21	22	23	24
Cachar ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	293	127	...	...	...	...	20
Non-Act labourers { adults	1,232	1,520	...	27	64	...	...
children	248	453	1,237	...	...	...	...
Total	1,773	2,100	1,237	27	64	...	20
Sylhet ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	456	284	...	...	...	1	1
Non-Act labourers { adults	3,789	1,993	...	3,312	770	...	...
children	1,542	792	1,128	...	...	...	...
Total	5,287	2,985	1,128	3,312	770	1	1
Surma Valley ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	650	411	...	...	...	1	21
Non-Act labourers { adults	4,621	2,819	...	3,339	834	...	...
children	1,780	1,155	2,365	...	...	...	...
Total	7,060	5,085	2,365	3,339	834	1	21
Kamrup ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	21	30	...	...	...	...	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	221	98	...	4	...	...	...
children	90	23	67	...	...	...	...
Total	332	151	67	4	...	...	...
Darrang ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	405	404	...	...	...	1	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	610	389	...	2,341	1,140	...	...
children	936	416	376	...	...	...	...
Total	2,041	1,209	376	2,341	1,140	1	...
Nowgong... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	189	174	...	...	...	...	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	75	107	...	297	50	...	...
children	44	66	414	...	...	...	...
Total	308	347	414	297	50	...	...
Sibsagar ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	644	687	...	...	...	10	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	774	666	...	1,669	4,354	...	...
children	257	366	1,178	...	...	...	...
Total	1,675	1,719	1,178	1,669	4,354	10	...
Lakhimpur ... { Act-I labourers (adults)	700	799	...	...	...	21	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	696	750	...	2,384	4,526	...	...
children	226	289	1,361	...	...	...	...
Total	1,712	1,838	1,361	2,384	4,526	21	...
Brahmaputra Valley... { Act-I labourers (adults)	2,139	2,094	...	...	...	32	...
Non-Act labourers { adults	2,317	2,130	...	6,612	10,120	...	...
children	1,553	1,120	3,396	...	...	...	...
Total	6,008	5,344	3,396	6,612	10,120	32	...
Total for the Province { Act-I labourers (adults)	2,798	2,505	..	...	...	33	21
Non-Act labourers { adults	6,907	5,603	..	9,951	10,154	...	...
children	3,333	2,235	5,761	...	...	...	...
Grand total	13,128	10,429	5,761	9,951	10,154	33	21

in the Province of Assam during the year 1898—continued.

the year 1898.									Annual strength.		
Cancelment for permanent unfitness under section 122.	Cancelment under section 139.	Suspended under section 120.	Efflux of time, section 141.	Redemption, section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1898.	Strength on 1st July 1898.	First-half year.	Second-half year.	Death-rate per mille.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		35
4	...	...	1,384	...	22	2,248	3,849	4,342	4,634	4,095	57·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	11,469	75,173	75,864	74,972	75,518	30·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,700	49,848	46,733	46,499	46,790	16·0
4	...	...	1,384	...	22	17,417	128,870	126,939	126,056	126,404	26·2
20	...	...	6,752	...	66	8,264	11,179	12,153	12,493	11,666	34·0
...	...	...	...	...	...	17,934	73,589	75,677	74,472	74,633	34·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	6,434	57,863	58,913	57,698	57,903	17·9
20	...	...	6,752	...	66	32,332	142,631	145,843	144,663	144,237	27·9
24	...	...	8,136	...	88	10,512	15,028	16,405	17,127	15,761	40·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	29,103	148,762	151,541	149,394	150,151	32·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	10,134	104,711	104,745	104,197	104,728	17·2
24	...	...	8,136	...	88	49,749	268,501	272,782	270,719	270,641	27·2
...	...	...	124	...	...	211	613	676	634	644	53·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	888	1,942	2,001	2,001	2,001	32·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	377	1,196	1,150	1,178	1,173	38·3
...	...	...	124	...	...	1,476	3,751	3,887	3,831	3,819	40·4
37	...	...	9,822	...	538	13,123	25,654	27,527	28,318	26,590	50·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	11,169	19,502	20,085	19,112	19,793	21·2
...	...	...	...	...	...	2,948	24,291	25,116	24,575	24,703	21·3
37	...	...	9,822	...	538	27,340	69,447	72,728	72,006	71,087	32·4
161	...	...	1,448	...	9	2,901	7,179	7,927	7,868	7,553	58·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,118	6,473	7,781	7,209	7,147	37·9
...	...	...	...	...	...	1,647	6,451	6,859	6,809	6,635	35·5
161	...	...	1,448	...	9	7,666	20,103	22,567	21,898	21,335	43·8
139	...	...	13,145	4	717	18,558	43,805	45,165	45,453	44,685	47·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	14,951	43,391	45,240	43,427	44,270	30·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,714	56,533	56,302	57,087	56,460	22·9
139	...	...	13,145	4	717	39,223	143,729	148,973	145,966	147,216	37·7
329	...	...	14,599	4	648	19,715	45,731	45,105	46,143	45,418	45·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	16,011	39,091	41,262	38,711	39,076	27·5
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,069	43,436	43,509	42,000	43,518	29·2
329	...	...	14,599	4	648	41,375	127,258	129,066	127,154	128,012	34·3
666	...	...	39,138	8	1,912	54,518	122,962	126,409	128,416	124,691	48·0
...	...	...	...	...	...	49,237	103,309	110,247	110,282	112,769	29·9
...	...	...	...	...	...	16,355	133,727	135,292	132,238	134,519	25·2
666	...	...	39,138	8	1,912	117,110	366,018	371,136	371,136	372,009	28·7
600	...	...	47,274	8	2,000	65,020	138,010	142,895	145,544	140,453	47·0
...	...	...	...	...	...	75,140	258,071	267,070	258,076	263,120	31·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	26,487	238,438	240,938	239,434	239,238	21·6
600	...	...	47,274	8	2,000	166,649	634,519	650,903	643,053	642,811	31·1

ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE (REV.) NO. 146—300—3-8-99.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1899.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
1900.

[*Price 1s. 6d.*] [*Price One Rupee.*]

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SHILLONG:
PRINTED BY CUNYNGHAM FRANCIES, PRESS SUPERINTENDENT, ASSAM.

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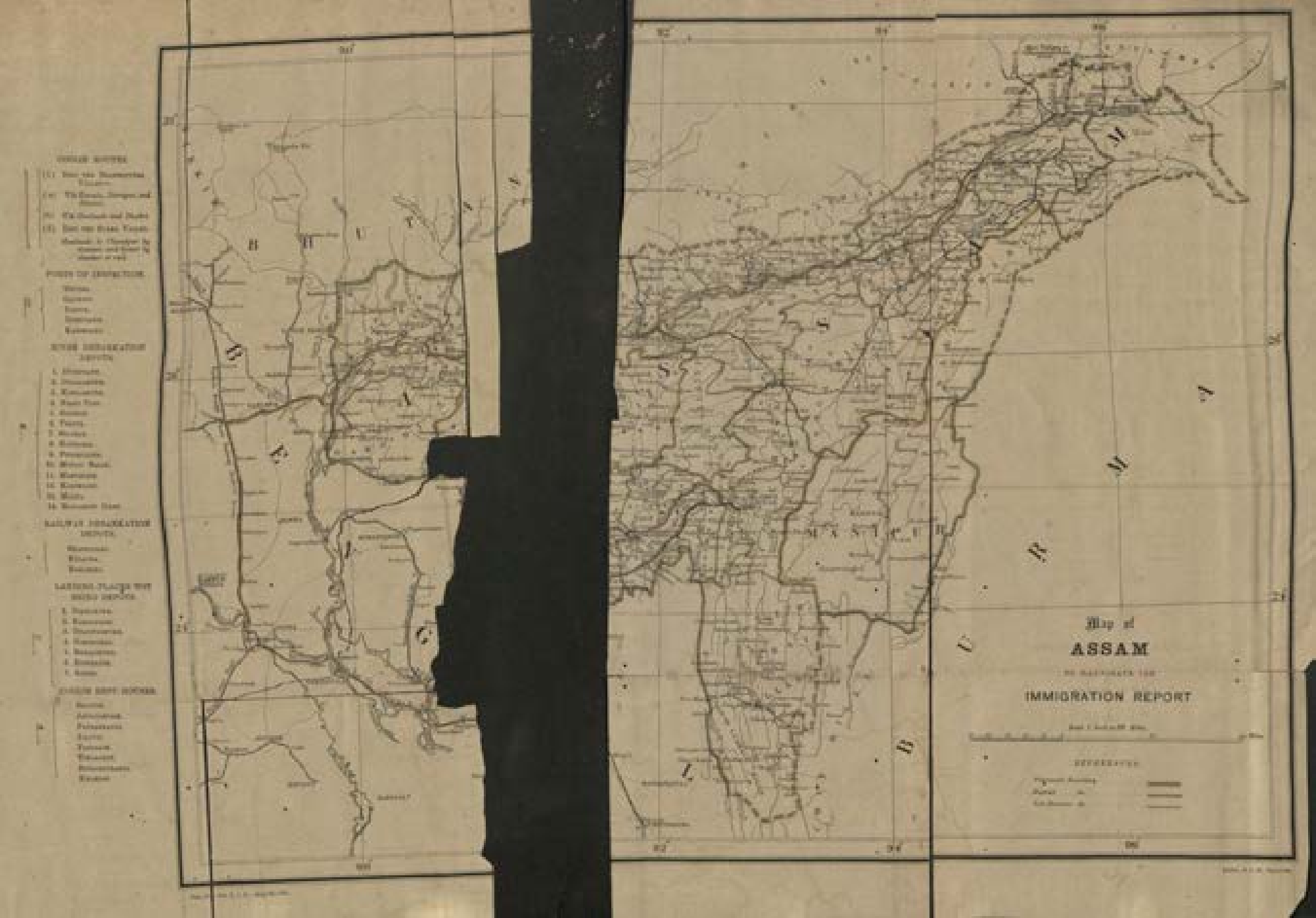
STATEMENT.

RETURN SHOWING THE STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE OF THE TEA GARDENS IN THE PROVINCE OF ASSAM DURING THE YEAR 1899 48-51


Map of
ASSAM
IMMIGRATION REPORT

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR 1899.

CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION.

THE present report deals only with labour imported for employment on tea gardens in the province, in the oil refinery at Margherita, in coal mines, and in a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. It does not deal with labourers who migrate annually to the province during the cold weather in search of employment on the Assam-Bengal Railway or under the Public Works Department, returning to their homes in April and May.

2. The following table gives particulars of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past four years :

Provincial figures of immigration.

Class of labourers.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	Increase or decrease, compared with 1895.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Act ... Sardari adults ...	10,460	22,490	12,080	7,571	—4,509	—37·3
Act ... Contractors' „ ...	18,870	18,127	10,559	11,065	+ 506	+ 4·7
Non-Act adults	31,971	25,711	12,877	7,236	—5,641	—43·8
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	61,301	66,328	35,516	25,872	—9,644	—27·1
Children	19,814	29,603	13,653	6,036	—7,617	—55·7
Grand total	81,115	95,931	49,169	31,908	—17,261	—35·1

In this table and in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter, except paragraph 8, the expression " Act adults " includes, as in previous reports, immigrants who, not being under contract, proceed to Dhubri and enter into contract there under section 112 of Act I of 1882.

The most noticeable feature in the above statement is the striking decrease in immigration during the year. Fewer coolies were imported during 1899 than in any year since 1887. As compared with 1898, there was a very large decrease in the number of Act coolies brought by sardars and in that of non-Act coolies, the number imported by contractors having slightly increased. The decrease was most noticeable in the Surma Valley, where the tea season of 1898 was a very bad one, and where garden managers were generally forced to curtail expenditure in all directions.

In the principal labour-importing districts of the Brahmaputra Valley, Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur, it is noticeable that, while the number of coolies imported by contractors increased, there was a falling off in the total number of coolies imported, both in the number of sardari recruitments and in the importations of non-Act labourers. This was due, not to a decreased demand for labour, but to the difficulty of obtaining coolies during a year of plenty in the recruiting districts. Since the close of the year the influence of famine has made itself felt, and a great stimulus has been afforded to recruiting.

District and valley statistics of immigration.

3. Statistics are given in the table below for each division and district of the province for the last two years:

District.	Act adults.			Non-Act adults.			Total Act and non-Act adults.			Children.			Grand total, including children.		
	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar ...	811	341	−57·95	3,104	1,808	−41·97	3,915	2,149	−45·28	1,071	400	−62·65	4,986	2,549	−49·02
Sylhet ...	989	413	−58·24	6,610	3,490	−47·42	7,599	3,903	−48·63	2,702	1,014	−62·48	10,301	4,917	−52·81
Total Surma Valley	1,800	754	−58·11	9,714	5,298	−45·45	11,514	6,052	−47·63	3,773	1,414	−62·30	15,287	7,466	−51·18
Kamrup ...	223	89	−60·09	56	63	+12·50	279	152	−45·51	104	24	−76·92	383	176	−54·04
Darrang ...	4,043	4,352	+7·58	416	322	−22·59	4,459	4,674	+4·30	1,539	991	−35·69	6,037	5,665	−6·83
Nowgong ...	1,179	852	−27·73	267	180	−32·58	1,446	1,032	−28·63	565	479	−15·22	2,011	1,511	−24·86
Sibsagar ...	6,991	5,169	−26·06	1,043	543	−47·93	7,044	5,712	−27·72	3,918	1,633	−58·32	11,872	7,381	−37·82
Lakhimpur ...	8,405	7,190	−25·34	1,351	837	−38·04	9,844	8,027	−18·45	3,615	1,489	−58·81	13,459	9,516	−29·29
Total Assam Valley	20,839	17,582	−14·19	3,133	1,945	−37·92	23,072	19,597	−17·29	9,790	4,622	−52·79	33,762	24,449	−27·58
Grand total ...	22,639	18,336	−17·68	12,847	7,236	−43·80	35,586	25,649	−27·15	13,563	6,036	−55·49	49,149	31,908	−35·10

The proportion of adult coolies imported into the Surma Valley under Act-I contract continues to decrease, and was only 12·47 per cent. of the total number imported during the year. In this portion of the province managers make use of Act XIII of 1859 to a very large extent, and coolies bound under this Act are returned as non-Act. While the total number of adults imported into the province declined by 27·15 per cent., there were 55·79 per cent. fewer children imported in 1899 than in 1898. This is a result of the decline already noticed in sardari recruitment and free immigration, compared with recruitment by contractors. Immigrants brought by sardars or coming of their own free will generally come in families, while contractors, as a rule, send up adults only.

4. The following statement gives the nationality and sex of adult immigrants and the agency by which Act immigrants were imported :

Nationality of immigrants.

Nationality of Immigrants.		Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sardars.		Contractors.					
		1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ... Men	4,377	3,964	3,648	2,909	1,513	819	9,538	7,692
	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ... Women	4,041	3,935	3,379	2,538	1,614	897	9,034	7,400
	Total	8,420	7,899	7,045	5,447	3,129	1,716	18,572	15,092
	Behar ... Men	256	193	77	173	219	274	552	640
	Behar ... Women	210	200	79	62	205	82	494	344
	Total	466	393	156	235	424	356	1,046	984
	Bengal Proper and Orissa ... Men	334	358	614	1,025	515	296	1,463	1,679
	Bengal Proper and Orissa ... Women	302	308	630	947	468	181	1,399	1,436
	Total	636	666	1,243	1,972	983	477	2,862	3,115
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ... Men		186	153	92	234	1,050	655	2,217	1,032
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ... Women		135	119	91	168	2,052	641	2,348	928
	Total	321	272	183	302	4,001	1,296	4,565	1,960
Central Provinces ... Men		1,043	1,079	796	1,225	1,632	1,281	3,477	3,585
Central Provinces ... Women		959	891	1,041	1,317	1,623	1,304	3,623	3,512
	Total	2,002	1,970	1,837	2,542	3,255	2,585	7,100	7,097
Madras ... Men		84	206	57	235	512	481	653	925
Madras ... Women		85	135	38	140	508	432	631	707
	Total	169	341	95	375	1,020	916	1,284	1,632
Bombay ... Men		...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Bombay ... Women		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Nepal ... Men		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Nepal ... Women		...	...	...	1	5	...	5	1
	Total	...	...	...	2	5	...	5	2
Assam ... Men		...	...	...	...	60	80	60	80
Assam ... Women		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	...	...	...	...	60	80	60	80
Total ... Men		6,288	5,953	5,284	5,892	6,392	3,969	17,964	15,814
Total ... Women		5,702	5,588	5,275	5,173	6,485	3,467	17,552	14,228
	Grand total	12,080	11,571	10,559	11,065	12,877	7,436	35,516	30,072

In spite of the decline, as compared with 1898, in the number of coolies imported, there was an increase in importations from Bengal, Madras, and the Central Provinces.

From the last-mentioned provinces 19,876 immigrants came to Assam in 1897, 7,100 in 1898, and 7,197 in 1899. The figure in 1898 was very low, and the slight increase in the year under review does not require any explanation. In each of the years 1895 and 1896, the number of immigrants from the North-Western Provinces was about 19,000, the large number being due to famine, but in subsequent years immigration from these provinces has decreased, and the number during the year under report was only 1,960.

Female immigrants.

5. The following table shows the proportion borne by women to the total number of adult immigrants from the different areas of recruitment:

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to total adult immigrants among—							
	Sardari immigrants.		Contractors' immigrants.		Non-Act immigrants.		All adult immigrants.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ...	47·9	49·6	48·2	46·6	31·5	30·2	48·6	48·2
Behar	45·0	44·8	50·6	26·4	48·3	23·0	47·2	29·9
Bengal Proper and Orissa	47·4	46·2	50·6	48·0	47·6	48·0	48·8	47·6
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	31·1	43·7	49·7	42·8	31·5	49·4	31·4	47·3
Central Provinces	47·7	45·2	56·6	49·8	49·8	30·4	51·0	48·8

Of the total number of coolies recruited, only 47·2 per cent. were women, as compared with 49·4 and 47·8 in the years 1898 and 1897, respectively. As already explained, the circumstances of the year did not encourage the immigration of entire families.

Extent to which Act labourers were recruited by contractors and garden sardars.

6. The statement below shows for each division and district the extent to which Act labourers were recruited by garden sardars and by contractors respectively and the average number imported by each sardar:

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.		Number of sardari coolies recruited.		Average number of recruits per sardar.		Number of contractors' coolies imported.		Percentage of increase or decrease of importations of Act labourers during 1899, as compared with 1898.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	Sardari.	Contractors'.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	93	107	371	257	3·9	2·4	440	84	— 30·7	— 80·9
Sylhet	178*	379	675	171	3·7	0·4	314	242	— 74·6	— 22·9
Total Surma Valley ...	271	486	1,046	428	3·8	0·8	754	326	— 59·1	— 56·7
Kamrup	18	36	121	67	6·7	1·8	102	22	— 44·6	— 78·4
Darrang	1,050	1,053	2,242	1,787	2·1	1·7	1,801	2,765	— 20·3	+ 53·5
Nowgong	185	217	646	727	4·1	3·3	533	125	+ 12·5	— 76·5
Sibsagar	1,559	1,973	4,802	2,688	3·0	1·4	2,099	2,511	— 44·0	+ 19·6
Lakhimpur	1,316	1,646	3,223	1,874	2·4	1·1	5,270	5,316	— 41·8	+ 0·8
Total Brahmaputra Valley...	4,098	4,925	11,034	7,143	2·6	1·4	9,805	10,739	— 35·2	+ 9·5
Grand total	4,369	5,411	12,080	7,571	2·7	1·4	10,559	11,063	— 37·3	+ 4·7

* Exclusive of 6 certificates cancelled afterwards.

In the whole province and in every district, except Nowgong, where there was a slight increase, the number of labourers recruited by sardars showed a considerable

diminution, while the number imported by contractors increased in the province as a whole, and especially in Darrang, though there was a marked decrease in the Surma Valley and in Nowgong. The recruiting season of 1899 was a time of plenty in the recruiting districts, and sardars, on this account, found more difficulty in inducing coolies to emigrate than in 1897 and 1898, when the majority of the Act coolies imported were brought by sardars. Managers were forced, therefore, to have recourse to contractors. Towards the end of 1899, when scarcity first appeared in some of the recruiting districts, the prospects of sardari recruitment became brighter, and a large number of sardars were sent down by managers. The results of this step will appear in the report for 1900. The average shown in column 7 of the table, it should be added, is misleading, being calculated on the number of sardars appointed in 1899, the effect of whose work will appear in the returns for 1900, as many of them appear to have been despatched in November and December 1899, and probably imported most of their coolies in January and February 1900.

Medical examination of sardari immigrants.

7. The statement below shows for the past two years, district by district, the number of certificates issued to sardars, which provided, under section 70 of the Act, for the medical examination of labourers prior to engagement; it shows also the proportion borne by such certificates to the total number of certificates granted to sardars:

District.	Number of certificates which provided for the medical examination of labourers.		Percentage of such certificates to total number of certificates to recruit granted to sardars.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	80	89	86·0	83·1
Sylhet	126	188	70·7	49·6
Kamrup	18	36	100·0	10·0
Darrang	623	591	59·3	56·1
Nowgong	119	206	76·7	94·9
Sibsagar	1,118	1,622	76·2	82·2
Lakhimpur	1,316	1,400	68·3	85·0
Total	3,400	4,132	77·8	76·3

Except in Cachar and Darrang, there was a satisfactory increase in the percentage of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers before emigration. The decrease in Cachar was slight. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet regrets that so few certificates in his district provide for medical examination, but explains that this is not surprising, as it is difficult to procure coolies at all. In Darrang, the largest Company in the district does not avail itself of this safeguard against the importation of sickly coolies, and it is a coincidence certainly, if it is not a result, that some of its gardens, in spite of excellent management in other directions, have frequently appeared on the unhealthy list.

Statistics of free or assisted emigration.

8. In the following table figures are given separately concerning the following classes of adult emigrants:—(1) those recruited through contractors under Chapter III of the Act; (2) those recruited through garden sardars under Chapter IV of the Act; (3) those who entered into contracts at Dhubri; (4) those who entered into contracts

in the actual labour districts; and (5) those who, after arrival in the labour districts, were employed as free labourers, *i.e.*, were not placed on contract under the Act:

District.	Act immigrants.			Free (non-Act) immigrants subsequently employed as Act labourers.			Free (non-Act) immigrants employed as free (non-Act) labourers and dependents.			Grand total.
	Contracted in recruiting districts.									
	Under Chapter III of Act.	Under Chapter IV of Act.	Total.	Contracted at Dhubri.	Contracted in actual labour district.	Total.	Adults.	Children.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	84	257	341	...	36	36	1,765	400	2,165	2,542
Sylhet	242	171	413	...	464	464	3,026	1,014	4,040	4,917
Total Surma Valley ...	326	428	754	...	500	500	4,791	1,414	6,205	7,459
Kamrup	15	40	55	34	...	34	63	24	87	176
Darrang	1,577	1,419	2,996	1,536	...	1,536	322	991	1,313	5,865
Nowgong	114	635	749	103	...	103	180	479	659	1,511
Sibsagar	1,694	2,111	3,805	1,394	359	1,753	184	1,639	1,823	7,381
Lakhimpur	3,289	1,423	4,712	2,478	7	2,485	830	1,489	2,319	9,516
Total Assam Valley ...	6,689	5,628	12,317	5,565	366	5,931	1,579	4,622	6,201	24,449
Grand total ...	7,015	6,056	13,071	5,565	866	6,431	6,370	6,036	12,406	31,908
Total of 1898 ...	6,502	10,434	66,936	3,703	1,284	6,987	11,593	13,653	25,246	49,169

Of 18,636 contracts executed before arriving in the labour districts, 29·8 per cent. were executed at Dhubri. The percentages in the years 1898, 1897, and 1896 were 25·2, 36·9, and 44·2 per cent., respectively, and it appears, therefore, that the steady decline in the proportion of contracts so executed has been checked.

Cost of importation.

9. No accurate information is obtainable in the province of the cost of importing coolies. It varies in different districts and on different gardens from about Rs. 50 for a sardari recruit to about Rs. 120 for a labourer recruited through a contractor. The Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Lakhimpur report that there was a considerable rise in the cost of importation owing to the difficulty of obtaining good recruits.

Medical rejections at Dhubri.

10. The number of immigrants and their dependents who arrived at the Dhubri depôts on their way to the various tea districts of the Assam Valley was 7,135. Of these, 5,698 were medically examined by the Civil Surgeon, with a view to placing them under contract, and 134, or 2·3 per cent., of those examined were rejected. Of those rejected, 73 were sent up to the gardens by depôt managers as dependents, 17 as free coolies, and 44 were repatriated. The percentage of rejections in 1898 was 6·6, and in 1897, 8·1, and the figures of the past year denote, therefore, that there was an improvement in the class of coolies imported.

Dhubri depôts.

11. At the beginning of the year the three depôts mentioned in the report for 1898 were still in existence. That belonging to Messrs. H. L. Mukharji Company was, however, closed on the 1st of August 1899 on account of mismanagement and want of funds. The management of the remaining two depôts during the year was satisfactory.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley.

12. Comparatively little use was made of the Assam-Bengal Railway to convey coolies to the gardens in Cachar. Of a total of 2,542 coolies imported into Cachar, only 272 were brought by railway. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar attributes this to the comparative cheapness of the river route, to the excellent arrangements for feeding immigrants on steamers, and to the fact that some owners of gardens who are financially interested in the Steamer Company naturally prefer to send coolies by the river route. Accurate statistics are not available for Sylhet, but it is known that of the 4,917 immigrants to that district, 1,799 came by river, and it is presumed that the remainder came by rail. The railway journey to the southern part of the Sylhet district is short, and the line runs close to many groups of gardens. Importation by rail to that district is, therefore, much more popular than in Cachar, where the railway journey is long and is apparently at present not more convenient to the gardens than the steamer route.

13. The extent to which debarkation depôts were used during the year is shown in the table below :

Debarkation depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants to district.	Number that passed through depôt.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.	
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishment, etc.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	2	2,542	2,542	...	29	16	2,497	...	1,053 2 0	3,447 8 4
Sylhet*	9	4,917	4,451†	6	30	569	636	...	129 9 3	3,904 8 11
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	1	5,865	5,088	210	30	27	48	...	1,749 3 6	2,119 11 0
Nowgong	1	1,511	1,544‡	289	13	12	1,355	2	446 15 0	434 7 11
Sibsagar	4	7,381	7,985§	1,572	108	18	5,024	...	1,370 15 3	3,082 2 10
Lakhimpur	1	9,136	8,713	810	41	...	7,862	...	469 9 0	1,091 10 0
Total for 1899	18	31,732	30,323	2,879	251	642	17,322	2	6,019 6 6	13,150 1 0
,, 1898	17	48,786	42,736	3,447	375	269	29,848	...	13,831 0 7	13,525 0 9
,, 1897	14	95,511	51,834	5,430	1,287	2,728	27,291	33	3,496 8 0	15,455 5 0

* In Sylhet figures for Railway depôts and the temporary depôt at Inathganj and the Madna depôt closed on 30th June 1899 are included.

† Includes 999 coolies destined for Cachar district.
‡ Includes 33 coolies destined for gardens of the Golaghat subdivision.
§ Includes 604 coolies destined for Lakhimpur district.

In Sylhet the temporary depôt at Inathganj was open from the 5th January to the 30th May, when it was finally closed. The regular depôt at Madna in that district was also closed from the 30th June, leaving seven depôts open at the end of the year, three of which were at stations on the Assam Bengal Railway. The depôt at Rangamati in the Darrang district was not used during 1899 and has not been included in the return. That at Kamalabari opened on the 1st December 1898 but not used in that year is, for the first time, included in the return in the present report. The proportion of coolies who passed through the depôts was 95·5 per cent. of the total number of immigrants, a satisfactory advance on 87·6 per cent. in 1898 and 62·7 in 1897. The number of detentions for want of a *guide* was large, particularly at the depôts in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. It is usually explained that the number of detentions in Sibsagar is

due to the passing of North Lakhimpur coolies through the Kokilamukh depôt, but even assuming that all the coolies for North Lakhimpur were thus detained, the number of coolies destined for gardens in the Sibsagar district detained in the depôts seems unnecessarily large.

On 15th August 1899 Gamirighat in the district of Darrang was added to the list of ports of debarkation for immigrants on the Brahmaputra river under the provisions of section 143 of Act I of 1882.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

14. The statement below shows the number of deaths which occurred among all classes of immigrants during transit between the port of embarkation and their destination in the Assam Valley:

		Number of deaths.		
		From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
On board the steamer.	Between Goalundo and Dhubri	7	1	8
	Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh. (a) Goalundo coolies	12	8	20
	Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh. (b) Jatrapur „	2	2	4
At Dhubri		14	1	15
„ Gauhati		...	...	...
„ Tezpur		15	1	16
„ Silghat		1	...	1
„ Nigriting		1	1	2
„ Kokilamukh		9	1	10
„ Disangmukh		4	1	5
„ Kamalabari		...	...	...
„ Dibrugarh		7	2	9
Total		72	18	90
Total for 1898		84	49	133

The year 1899, like 1898, was a healthy one. The number of deaths *en route* in 1897 was 1,245 and in 1896, 768. Making due allowance for the diminished volume of immigration, it may be said that the reduction in mortality is attributable to improved arrangements for the comfort of immigrants on steamers, but the occurrence of a serious outbreak of cholera since the close of the year shows that, even under the most favourable conditions, the transit of immigrants to Assam is always liable to danger from this source. The weak point in the arrangements is the almost unavoidable introduction to the steamers at Goalundo of coolies fresh from the railway who have already got cholera in their system. It is not uncommon for cholera to break out on the steamer directly after leaving Goalundo, and in spite of all disinfectants and precautions at intermediate stations, the steamer remains infected for the whole voyage.

Mortality during transit to the Surma Valley.

15. The figures given in the statements below are based on reports furnished by Hospital Assistants in charge of debarkation depôts in Sylhet and Cachar, and relate only to the mortality which occurred amongst the immigrants and their dependents who passed through the depôts:

District.	Year.	Number of immigrants who passed through the depôts.	Deaths.		
			En route from Goalundo.	At the depôts.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	1899	2,542	...	3	3
	1898	4,774	...	8	8
	1897	2,808	19	46	65
Sylhet	1899	4,451	...	2	2
	1898	5,171*	2†	4	6
	1897	7,338	25	55	80

* Includes those who passed through railway depôts. | † One in steamer and one on the railway.

There is no check on these returns, which are compiled by Hospital Assistants in charge of depôts from the verbal statements of the sardars or peons accompanying immigrants. They show, however, that the mortality was very low, only 5 deaths in transit being reported amongst 7,459 persons immigrating into the valley.

Anti-cholera inoculation.

16. Information obtained, as in previous years, concerning the coolies inoculated at Purulia who died (1) before embarkation, (2) between the port of embarkation and the garden, and (3) after arrival on the garden, is given below:

Statement showing the number of Deaths from Cholera amongst inoculated Coolies during the year 1899.

District.	Number of inoculated coolies imported.	Number of deaths from cholera among coolies shown in column 2.				Remarks.
		Between recruiting district and port of embarkation.	Between port of embarkation and garden.	After arrival on garden.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	117	...	...	...	...	
Sylhet	200	...	...	...	...	
Kamrup	21	...	...	..	...	
Darrang	662	...	...	1	1	
Nowgong	96	...	...	...	...	
Sibsagar	785	...	...	6	6	
Lakhimpur	365	...	...	...	...	
Total	2,246	...	...	7	7	

The year under review was very free from cholera in transit. The percentage of deaths from cholera *en route* (between the port of embarkation and the garden) among coolies in general was ·294. No inoculated coolies died of cholera in transit.

The optional return mentioned in paragraph 16 of the report for 1898 was furnished by four gardens. Cholera epidemics were rare during the year, and many returns were not to be looked for. The returns are summarised in the table below:

Number in affected groups.		Number of cases.		Number of deaths.	
Uninoculated.	Inoculated.	Uninoculated.	Inoculated.	Uninoculated.	Inoculated.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1,161	346	36	17	12	10

Of the 10 inoculated persons who died, 8 had been inoculated over two years before death and the remaining two within six months of death.

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

17. Cases of alleged fraud or irregularity in recruitment were, as usual, carefully enquired into. Two classes of cases were enquired into at Dhubri:

(*a*) Cases instituted in consequence of communications received from the districts of recruitment either in the form of a letter from the Magistrate or Subdivisional Officer or District Superintendent of Police, or in the form of a petition or letter by post from the relations of the person alleged to have been fraudulently recruited.

(*b*) Those instituted on complaint made at Dhubri by person concerned at the time of registration.

There were 34 cases of the (*a*) class and 23 of the (*b*) class. In 30 cases of the (*a*) class no trace was found of the persons enquired after. Four persons were traced, and of these, the contracts of two were cancelled after enquiry. The remaining two cases were still under enquiry at the close of the year. Of the 23 complaints made by coolies or batches of coolies, 10 were found to be entirely false, and the persons were sent on to their gardens. In one case a woman declared, after making her complaint, her willingness to proceed to the garden. In 5 cases the complaints of fraudulent recruitment having been found to be true, the coolies were sent to their homes. In 6 of the remaining 7 cases, 20 coolies were concerned, the contracts of 8 of whom were cancelled, the remaining 12 persons being sent on to their gardens. One case was pending at the close of the year.

Cases enquired into in the labour districts.

18. The following table shows the total number of cases enquired into in the actual labour districts during the past two years, and distributes them according as they were ultimately declared to be true, false, or not proved :

District.	Complaints.		True cases.		False cases.		Not proved.		Pending.	
	1896.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	4	7	4	6	...	...	...	1	...	...
Sylhet	1	17	1	6	...	...	...	2	...	9
Kamrup	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Darrang	4*	34	1	20	...	3	3	2	...	9
Nowgong	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	22	28	10	9	3	9	8†	6	1	4
Lakhimpur	53	68	22	33	18	24	6	7	7	4
Total	84	157	38	76	21	36	17	19	8	26

* This includes the two pending cases of 1897. | † Two cases in which emigrants were not traceable.

The policy of the Administration is to freely repatriate, at the expense of the employer, all coolies regarding whose recruitment there is any reasonable suspicion of fraud or irregularity. The increase in the number of cases in 1899 is principally due to the difficulty of obtaining coolies by fair means during a prosperous year.

19. The cases included in the above table are classified below separately for the two valleys to show how many of the persons concerned had executed contracts of any description and, in cases of immigrants under contract, where the contracts were executed :

—	Number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons.	Number under contract.			Number not under contract.	Contracts executed in—				
			Act I of 1882.	Other forms of contract.	Not stated.		Recruiting districts.	Calcutta or Goalundo.	Dhubri.	Labour districts.	Not stated.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Surma Valley... True ...	12	21	13	1	...	7	14	...	...	...	...
Surma Valley... False ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Surma Valley... Not proved ...	3	7	2	...	...	5	2	...	...	...	...
Total	15	28	15	1	...	12	16	...	...	...	...
Assam Valley... True ...	64	94	93	...	...	1	39	8	46	...	...
Assam Valley... False ...	36	50	44	3	3	...	23	3	21	...	3
Assam Valley... Not proved ...	16	20	11	...	9	...	5	1	5	...	9
Total	116	164	148	3	12	1	67	12	72	...	12
Grand total	131	192	163	4	12	13	83	12	72	...	12
Total for 1898	76	118	88	17	7	6	64	10	31	...	7

CHAPTER II.

LABOUR FORCE.

20. The statement below shows the additions to, and deductions from, the total labour force of the province during the year 1899:

Statistics of labour force.

Labour force remaining at the end of 1898	634,519
ADDITIONS—	
Imported by contractors or garden sardars, including free labourers and dependents imported direct	31,908
Local labour contracts entered into under sections 111 and 112 of Act I of 1882	27,624
Received from other gardens	6,614
Deserters recaptured	623
Remaining after expiry of contract	35,662
Otherwise obtained	24,686
Births	16,857
Total of additions	143,974
DEDUCTIONS—	
Transferred to other gardens	5,051
Left with permission or on expiry of contract	75,370
Deaths	17,610
Desertions	19,560
Free labourers put under contract	22,081
Contracts cancelled under section 11A	67
Contracts cancelled under sections 111, 140, or 177, Act I of 1882...	2
Contracts cancelled under section 122	389
Contracts cancelled under section 129	...
Contracts redeemed under section 142	10
Contracts dissolved by mutual consent	2,145
Total of deductions	142,285
Net increase during the year	1,689
Grand total at the close of the year	636,208

The number of additions to the labour force was far smaller than in 1898. The number of casualties, however, declined in proportion, the net result being an increase of '26 per cent. in the total labour force at the close of the year.

21. The total labour force at the beginning of each of the last three years and the mean strength for the two half-years of 1899 are shown in the table below:

Mean strength of the labour force.

Class of labourers.	1st January 1897.	1st January 1898.	1st January 1899.	1st July 1899.	Mean strength for the first half-year of 1899.	31st December 1899.	Mean strength for the second half-year of 1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Act adults	135,670	148,192	138,010	132,019	135,014	131,897	131,958
Non-Act { Adults ...	241,124	251,783	258,071	272,435	265,253	263,536	267,985
Non-Act { Children ...	212,085	232,833	238,438	240,503	239,470	240,775	240,639
Total	588,879	632,808	634,519	644,957	639,738	636,208	640,582

The labour force of the province was at its maximum in July 1898, when it exceeded by nearly 6,000 the force on the 1st July 1899. This does not indicate any falling off in the demand for labour, but merely a difficulty in meeting the demand. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang reports that, although some of the more favourably-situated gardens are well stocked with labour, in others leaf had to be left on the bushes for want of hands to pluck it.

22. The total labour force of each district and the variations in strength during the year are shown below:

District statistics of the labour force.

District.	1st January 1899.	31st December 1899.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Cachar	125,870	125,396	19·7	— 474	— 0·37
Sylhet	142,631	142,384	22·4	— 247	— 0·17
Total Surma Valley	268,501	267,780	42·1	— 721	— 0·27
Kamrup	3,751	3,433	0·5	— 318	— 8·47
Darrang	69,447	72,206	11·3	+ 2,759	+ 3·97
Nowgong	20,103	19,443	3·1	— 660	— 3·28
Sibsagar	145,459	145,449	22·9	— 10	— 0·007
Lakhimpur	127,258	127,897	20·1	+ 639	+ 0·50
Total Assam Valley	366,018	368,428	57·9	+ 2,410	+ 0·66
Grand total	634,519	636,208	100·0	+ 1,689	+ 0·26

The total labour force increased only in the districts of Darrang and Lakhimpur. In Darrang the increase was mainly in non-Act adults; there was a slight increase in the number of children, while the number of Act adults declined. In Lakhimpur the increase was also mainly in non-Act adults, there being but slight variation under the other heads.

23. The nationality and sex of the adult labour force during the last two years are shown in the following statement:

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

Nationality.	Sex.	Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Ratio of nationality.
		1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal: Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas ...	Men ...	49,211	48,725	40,411	40,500	89,622	88,225	44·4
	Women ...	36,141	35,165	52,716	52,157	87,059	87,322	
Behar	Men ...	4,994	5,791	9,668	9,997	13,662	13,788	6·5
	Women ...	2,194	2,783	8,991	9,208	12,185	12,991	
Bengal Proper and Orissa ...	Men ...	8,025	7,727	23,587	23,576	31,612	31,303	16·9
	Women ...	8,420	8,071	27,257	27,528	35,677	35,599	
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	Men ...	4,422	5,611	25,339	26,089	31,761	30,000	15·8
	Women ...	2,793	3,216	20,937	20,145	23,730	23,361	
Central Provinces	Men ...	13,105	11,574	8,245	9,842	20,450	21,416	10·7
	Women ...	11,119	10,792	8,407	10,066	20,526	20,858	
Madras	Men ...	2,759	2,720	3,811	3,133	5,570	5,853	2·9
	Women ...	2,012	1,959	3,005	3,469	5,017	5,428	
Bombay	Men ...	20	8	42	66	62	74	...
	Women ...	17	6	28	48	45	54	
Nepal	Men ...	31	28	122	92	153	120	...
	Women ...	5	3	74	65	79	68	
Assam	Men ...	854	976	5,709	6,743	6,561	7,719	3·8
	Women ...	484	545	2,722	2,812	3,206	3,357	
Total	Men ...	72,625	69,430	116,532	119,038	189,157	188,468	...
	Women ...	65,385	62,447	124,139	124,498	189,524	186,965	
Grand total	.....	138,010	131,877	238,671	243,536	378,681	375,433	100·0

Compared with 1898, the variations in the percentages of the total labour force under each of the several nationalities are slight. The increase in the number of natives of Assam is noticeable. These coolies consist of Kacharis and others, who go up the Brahmaputra Valley in the working season from Kamrup district to work in the gardens, principally of Darrang and Sibsagar, and of Nagas, who come down from the hills of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Since the destruction of cultivation by the earthquake and floods of 1897, increased numbers of Kacharis and others leave their homes annually in the working season to work on the tea gardens in Darrang.

24. In the following table the labourers employed in the divisions of the Surma and Brahmaputra Valleys, respectively, are distributed according to nationality:

	Surma Valley.	Assam (Brahmaputra) Valley.
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ...	38,212	137,315
Behar	13,873	11,906
Bengal Proper and Orissa	37,825	29,077
North-Western Provinces and Oudh ...	50,313	12,048
Central Provinces	13,015	29,168
Madras	7,195	4,096
Bombay	57	71
Nepal	65	123
Assam	880	10,194

There was no change in the distribution of labourers of the different nationalities between the two valleys.

25. The percentages of Act and non-Act labourers of each nationality are given in the table below:

Nationality.	1898.	1899.		
	Total.	Act labourers.	Non-Act labourers.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
Bengal ... Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas ...	44·6	56·0	38·6	44·4
Bengal ... Behar	6·6	5·0	7·3	6·5
Bengal ... Bengal Proper and Orissa	16·9	12·0	19·4	16·9
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	16·6	5·4	21·0	15·8
Central Provinces	16·1	16·9	7·6	10·7
Madras	2·7	3·6	2·5	2·9
Assam	2·3	1·1	3·6	2·8
Total	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

The proportion of each nationality to the total labour force was practically the same as in 1898. The proportion of natives of Assam under Act-I agreement rose from ·9 to 1·1 per cent. of the whole Act strength, and that of non-Act Assamese from 3·2 to 3·6 per cent. of the non-Act force.

26. The statement below gives the mean strength of the labour force in each district for each half-year of 1899 and for the whole year. The percentages of mortality and desertions are calculated from these figures:

Mean strength of the labour force in each district.

District.	Act,			Non-Act,						Total annual strength.		
				Adults.			Children.					
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual mean.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	2,521	2,894	2,802	75,160	75,119	75,139	46,975	47,404	47,084	125,546	125,509	125,497
Sylhet ...	10,348	8,784	9,516	74,718	72,661	73,190	58,148	58,643	58,444	143,212	143,089	143,150
Kamrup ...	507	533	565	2,092	2,050	2,071	1,227	1,174	1,200	3,826	3,757	3,836
Darrang ...	25,093	24,831	24,862	21,645	23,127	22,386	24,522	24,882	24,702	71,261	72,840	71,950
Nowgong ...	6,989	6,709	6,849	7,022	6,947	6,984	6,106	6,432	6,418	20,118	20,088	20,253
Sibsagar ...	42,751	42,555	42,653	45,323	45,767	45,646	58,394	58,843	58,368	146,671	146,666	146,668
Lakhimpur ...	45,824	45,849	45,836	29,090	29,313	29,201	43,709	43,870	43,835	118,713	119,032	118,872
Total ...	133,034	131,038	133,186	265,253	267,985	266,619	239,470	240,639	240,954	630,738	640,982	640,760

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

27. The number of contracts made in 1899, as compared with the preceding year, is shown below:

Number of contracts made.

—	1898.	1899.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4
In the actual labour districts under section 111 of the Act.	13,671	11,497	—15·9
In the actual labour districts under section 112 of the Act.	15,066	16,127	+ 7·0
At Dhubri under section 112A of the Act ...	5,700	5,566	— 2·3
In the recruiting districts	16,936	13,071	—22·8
Total	51,373	46,261	— 9·9

There is a growing tendency towards an increase in the number of contracts made under section 112, *i. e.*, for more than one year, in the actual labour districts.

28. In the statement below, the number of contracts returned as executed under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code is given for each district:

District.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3
Cachar	1,100	405
Sylhet	84	1*
Kamrup	22	...
Darrang	...	...
Nowgong	...	...
Sibsagar	1,032	169
Lakhimpur	1,156	1,108
Total	3,394	1,683

* Figures for two subdivisions are not available.

The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar reports that contracts under this section seem to be used only for the importation of coolies, renewals being made by a verbal contract under Act XIII, brief particulars of which are noted in a register. In Lakhimpur contracts under section 492 were executed principally by coolies engaged by the Assam Railways and Trading Company. The great difference between the number recruited under this section in Sibsagar in 1898 and 1899 is apparently due to the substitution of contracts under Act I for Act XIII and section-492 contracts in a few gardens. No returns are available for contracts under Act XIII by which most of the coolies in the Surma Valley are bound. Contracts under this Act are reported to be gaining in favour in part of Darrang district, while losing ground in Sibsagar.

29. The following table shows the number of contracts executed locally under sections 111 and 112 of the Act, and the sex and nationality of labourers entering into such contracts:

Nationality of labourers executing local contracts.

District.	Sex.	Contracts under section 111.	Contracts under section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality.										Total of columns 3 and 4.
				Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Assam.	Nepal.	Bombay.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14
Cachar ...	Men ...	21	11	13	...	10	4	5	...	...	...	...		32
	Women ...	3	1	1	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...		4
	Total of 1899 ..	24	12	14	...	11	6	5	...	...	...	...		36
	,, ,, 1898 ...	72	54	21	22	27	16	40	...	...	...	...		120
Sylhet ...	Men ...	1,695	284	477	264	282	158	116	659	...	...	3		1,959
	Women ..	1,013	216	281	123	218	87	55	471	...	...	5		1,139
	Total of 1899 ...	2,708	510	758	386	500	245	171	1,130	...	...	8		3,218
	,, ,, 1898 ...	4,447	885	1,281	624	1,037	590	295	1894	...	1	10		5,332
Kamrup ...	Men ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...
	Women ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...
	Total of 1899 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...
	,, ,, 1898 ...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		1
Darrang ...	Men ...	1,411	1,054	1,519	233	150	69	306	80	...	3	305		2,465
	Women ...	1,342	721	1,302	83	204	57	266	90	...	...	61		2,063
	Total of 1899 ...	2,753	1,775	2,821	316	354	126	572	170	...	3	366		4,528
	,, ,, 1898 ...	3,248	1,750	2,962	265	580	163	372	262	...	3	391		4,998
Nowgong ...	Men ...	322	179	243	31	58	18	125	...	...	...	26		501
	Women ...	339	30	169	26	54	8	103	...	...	...	3		369
	Total of 1899 ...	661	209	412	57	112	26	234	...	...	...	29		870
	,, ,, 1898 ...	521	98	392	51	114	12	42	...	...	...	8		619
Sibsagar ...	Men ...	1,514	3,572	3,116	401	772	301	333	71	...	1	188		5,086
	Women ...	916	2,236	2,661	302	648	209	180	56	...	...	116		4,152
	Total of 1899 ...	2,430	6,808	5,777	705	1,420	510	513	107	...	1	304		9,238
	,, ,, 1898 ...	1,973	6,566	5,152	787	1,432	369	358	116	...	...	324		8,541
Lakhimpur ...	Men ...	1,409	3,726	3,734	145	475	110	504	122	...	1	54		5,005
	Women ..	1,512	3,017	3,188	66	514	79	433	91	...	...	58		4,429
	Total of 1899 ...	2,921	6,813	7,022	211	989	189	997	213	...	1	112		9,434
	,, ,, 1898 ...	2,404	5,813	6,919	168	865	246	683	167	...	1	68		8,777
	Grand total of 1899 .	11,497	16,127	16,824	1,576	3,386	1,102	2,392	1,620	...	5	279		27,624
	Grand total of 1898 ...	13,671	15,066	16,732	1,917	4,055	1,389	1,799	2,039	...	5	811		28,737

Contracts under section 111 are for terms not exceeding one year, and do not require the intervention of a Magistrate at the time of execution. Contracts made under section 112 must be attested by a Magistrate or Inspector, and may extend to four years. The number of contracts executed under Act I again declined in the Surma Valley.

30. Details of local contracts entered into in the actual labour districts, the classes of labourers who entered into them, and the perids of the contracts are given in the table below :

Details of local contracts.

District.	Section 111.	Section 112.	Class of labourers.				Number of years.					
			Newly-imported.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolies transferred.	Local.	Under one year.	One.	Two.	Under two and a half.	Three.	Four.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	24	12	6	30	...	...	...	24	...	1	11	...
Sylhet	2,708	510	510	2,680	...	28	...	2,708	...	...	488	22
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2,753	1,775	...	3,605	...	923	...	2,829	971	7	364	357
Nowgong	661	209	...	60	...	810	...	661	93*	...	68	48
Sibsagar	2,430	6,808	359	8,343	...	536	189	3,193	4,675†	...	1,135	45
Lakhimpur	2,921	6,813	7	9,522	...	205	5	3,226	5,496‡	99§	513‖	395¶
Total of 1899 ...	11,497	16,127	882	24,240	...	2,502	194	12,641	11,235	107	2,579	868
„ „ 1898 ...	13,671	15,066	1,200	24,764	...	1,773	158	15,034	10,310	826	1,768	641

* Includes one contract under two years.
† „ 977 contracts under two years.
‡ „ 3 „ „
§ Includes 4 contracts under 2½ years.
‖ „ 6 „ 3 „
¶ „ 18 „ 4 „

31. The following table shows for what periods contracts were executed at Dhubri during 1898 and 1899 :

Periods of contracts executed at Dhubri.

Year.	Three-year contracts.			Four-year contracts.			Total contracts.		
	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.	Labourers.	Dependents.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1898	113	72	185	5,587	2,181	7,768	5,700	2,253	7,953
1899	209	170	379	5,357	1,240	6,597	5,566	1,410	6,976

It will be noticed that, as in previous years, nearly all the Dhubri contracts were executed for the maximum term of four years.

32. An account of the local contracts under section 111, which were verified by the Magistrate or Inspector during 1899, is given below:

Verification of contracts

District.	Number of contracts under section 111.				Number not capable of verification on account of					Percentage of contracts verified.	
	Remaining unverified at close of previous year.	Executed during the year.	Total.	Number verified.	Expiry of contracts.	Death or desertion of labourers.	Sickness of the labourers.	Other causes.	Total.	(a) On total number of contracts.	(b) On contracts capable of verification.
1	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar ...	...	24	24	24	...	...	...	...	...	100·0	100·0
Sylhet ...	124	2,708	2,832	2,614	91	39	16	72	218	92·3	100·0
Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	815	2,753	3,568	2,524	159	22	31	833	1,044	70·7	100·0
Nowgong ...	73	661	734	571	40	18	...	105	163	77·7	100·0
Sibsagar ...	233	2,450	2,683	1,980	75	9	6	593	683	74·3	100·0
Lakhimpur ...	1,172	2,921	4,093	2,901	420	42	19	651	1,192	70·8	100·0
Total	2,417	11,497	13,914	10,614	845	130	72	2,253	3,300	76·3	100·0

The number of unverified contracts is unduly large, and calls for special attention from the Deputy Commissioners of Darrang and Lakhimpur.

33. The table below shows the number of contracts which expired by lapse of time, the number of such expiries reported, and the number of contracts cancelled or determined during the year under the different sections of the Act:

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

District.	Number shown in garden returns as time-expired.	Number of time-expired contracts reported under section 141.	Number cancelled under section 118A.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 111.	Number cancelled by Inspector under section 118B.	Number suspended by Inspector for temporary ineffectiveness, section 120.	Number made void by finding of Committee or by orders of Local Government in cases of offences of certain sections 119 and 121.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 120.	Number cancelled by Magistrate under section 126A.	Number released under section 140.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	1,208	1,305	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	5,903	5,913*	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	10
Kamrup	69	67	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	74
Darrang	7,534	7,371†	16	...	...	...	16	...	...	...	4	449
Nowgong	1,581	1,575	2‡	...	...	...	13	...	...	...	...	1
Sibsagar	11,393	13,304	14	...	...	...	55	...	2	...	...	912
Lakhimpur	12,745	13,745	29	...	...	...	239	...	...	...	6	699
Total for 1899	40,430	41,281	69	...	...	...	389	...	2	...	10	2,145
„ „ 1898	47,274	47,158†	23	1	...	...	690	20	...	...	8	2,000

* This includes 20 contracts which were dissolved by mutual consent.
† „ 583 „ „ „ „
‡ Cancelled at the depôt and repatriated from there and were not sent to the garden.

34. *Section* 141.—*Notice of determination of contracts.*—In Darrang 163 determinations of contracts were not reported. In the province generally, there was a great improvement in such reporting, and the Chief Commissioner is glad to observe the improvement in Lakhimpur.

35. *Section* 118A.—*Cancelment of contracts for irregularities in recruitment.*—The number of such cancellations rose from 33 to 69, 47 of which were of the contracts of women who had come to the province unaccompanied by husband or guardian. Some of these were very distressing cases, and the Chief Commissioner has had before him ample evidence that the present law affords undue facilities for the recruitment of such women.

36. *Section* 122.—*Cancelment of contracts for permanent incapacity.*—The number of contracts cancelled in 1898 and 1899, owing to the persons bound by them becoming

permanently incapacitated for labour, the proportion of such labourers who were newly imported, and the agency by which they were imported, are shown in the following statement :

District.	Number of contracts cancelled under section 122.		Newly imported.	Agency by which imported.		
	1898.	1899.		Contractor.	Sardar.	Locally engaged.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	4	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	20	4	...	4	...	...
Kamrup	...	2	2	2	...	...
Darrang	37	16	...	16	...	...
Nowgong	161	73	2	65	8	...
Sibsagar	139	55	21	21	33	1
Lakhimpur	329	239	44	205	34	...
Total	690	389	69	313	75	1

37. *Contracts dissolved by mutual consent.*—The following statement gives the number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent in 1898 and in 1899:

District.	1898.	1899.
Cachar	22	...
Sylhet	66	10
Kamrup	...	74
Darrang	538	449
Nowgong	9	1
Sibsagar	717	912
Lakhimpur	648	699
Total	2,000	2,145

Of the 449 contracts cancelled in Darrang, 120 were cancelled with a view to renewal; 4 were those of new coolies whose contracts were cancelled, as they were found unfit to labour, and 2 were those of persons who had been fraudulently recruited and who were repatriated by the manager. The contracts determined in this manner in Sibsagar are reported to have been generally dissolved with a view to renewal. Of 699 contracts dissolved by mutual consent in Lakhimpur, 549 were renewed.

The Chief Commissioner has already expressed the opinion that sufficient regard is not paid to this question by District Officers, and he has come across some gross cases in which the loop-hole of this procedure has been resorted to in order to escape the legal discharge of obligations towards sickly or unsatisfactory labourers. He again enjoins on Deputy Commissioners the necessity of making this a special point of enquiry at inspections and of stating in their annual reports, as far as they are able to do so, the actual number of coolies who dissolved their contracts by mutual consent and afterwards executed fresh agreements.

38. No contracts were made void during the year on account of estates being declared unfit for the residence of labourers.

39. *Section 142.—Redemption of contracts.*—Ten contracts were redeemed—four in Darrang and six in Lakhimpur. In 1898, eight contracts were redeemed, and in 1897, 25.

Extent to which section 170 and the second paragraph of section 121 are made use of.

40. Under section 170, if a labourer absents himself from work without reasonable cause, the period of such absence may be added by the Inspector to the term of his contract unless the labourer consents to forfeit 4 annas for each day of absence. Labourers absent from sickness for more than 30 days in any one year are liable, under section 121, to have the period in excess of 30 days added to the term of their contracts, or forfeit 1½ anna per diem for the period of absence in excess of 30 days. In Sibsagar, the only district in which advantage was taken of these provisions of the Act during the year 1899, endorsements were made by Inspectors on contracts extending the period on account of absence from work in 147 cases.

41. Certain particulars are given in the following table regarding the repatriation of labourers on tea gardens whose contracts were cancelled under the provisions of the Act:

Repatriation of labourers whose contracts were cancelled.

1	2																3													
	Number of contracts cancelled.																Number of coolies repatriated.													
District.	Under section 11A.		Under section 11B.		Under section 11AA.		Under section 11BB.		Under section 121.		Under section 139.		Under section 140.		Under section 140A.		Total.		Under section 11C (section 11A).		Under section 140I (section 139).		Under section 140C.		Under section 140D (11A, 11B).		Under section 140E.		Total.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
Cachar	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	8	...	8	4	...	15	...	...	...	10	4	29	12
Sylhet ...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	20	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	4	1	...	20	...	5	...	...	...	1	...	27	...
Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Darrang ...	...	1	16	...	...	...	...	...	37	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	38	32	1	14	29	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	30	30
Nowgong ...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	161	73	...	...	...	...	...	...	161	75	...	2	75	27	2	1	...	...	...	...	77	30
Sibsagar ...	...	10	14	...	...	...	...	...	139	55	...	...	...	...	...	...	147	71	3*	13	91	15	...	2	...	...	...	...	98	30
Lakhimpur ...	...	22	29	...	...	...	...	...	289	239	...	...	...	...	...	...	330	268	14	29	267	171	8	...	...	...	2	1	291	201
Total ...	...	33	69	...	...	1	...	...	600	389	...	...	...	...	...	...	724	460	33	66	486	231	30	3	...	...	13	5	552	305

4									5							
Coolies whose contracts were cancelled under section 122 and who were not repatriated.									Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.							
District.	Number who will be repatriated, as a sardar is available to accompany them.		Number who preferred to remain on the garden after the date.		Number who died.		Number who absconded.		Number sent to a lunatic asylum.		Under section 140C.		Under section 140E.		Total.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
											Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	339 15 6	...	...	...	339 15 6	...
Sylhet	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	196 1 6	...	...	...	196 1 6	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16 10 0	...	...	...	16 10 0
Darrang	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	73 3 9	...	...	...	73 3 9	...
Nowgong	...	...	25	38	22	6	39	2	...	...	39 0 0	...	...	...	39 0 0	...
Sibsagar	...	...	42	40	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	39 0 0	...	...	...	39 0 0
Lakhimpur	...	...	62	68	...	...	...	...	...	...	179 4 9	...	65	...	184 4 9	...
Total	...	...	137	150	28	6	39	2	...	...	767 9 6	55 10 0	65	...	832 9 6	55 10 0

* Excluding 3 sent down under warrant received from the recruiting district under section 50, Criminal Procedure Code, before their contracts were cancelled.

The contracts of 69 labourers were cancelled under section 11A for wrongful recruitment, and of these, 66 were repatriated at the expense of the managers concerned. Of 460 coolies whose contracts were cancelled under the various provisions of the Act, 305 were repatriated at an expense of Rs. 55-10 to the Inland Labour Transport Fund, the rest of the charges being borne by the gardens concerned.

The adoption of a uniform system of repatriating coolies, which would ensure their arriving at their own homes in the different parts of India, was the subject of correspondence between this Administration and the Government of Bengal during the year. The Bengal Government propose to prepare a scheme to give effect to the Chief Commissioner's proposals when the new Emigration Bill is passed into law.

Wages.

42. The figures given in the following statement are based on information obtained by officers inspecting gardens, who are required to ascertain the wages paid during the month preceding that in which the inspection is held:

Subdivision.	Act.		Non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr	4 14 6	3 9 6	5 0 1	4 0 2	2 8 0
Hailakandi	4 7 11	3 8 1	4 14 11	3 13 11	2 3 10
North Sylhet	4 6 5	2 14 6	4 13 11	3 3 1	2 3 8
South „	4 5 10	3 13 1	4 12 8	3 7 5	2 1 4
Karimganj	4 2 11	4 5 2	4 4 8	3 5 4	2 6 7
Habiganj	4 3 8	3 2 9	4 15 4	3 11 11	2 0 5
Kamrup	4 7 8	3 10 8	4 12 4	3 13 1	2 5 10
Darrang, sadr	4 5 7	3 10 3	5 5 0	3 5 2	2 3 4
Mangaldai	4 1 11	2 13 10	5 11 0	3 4 3	1 12 1
Nowgong	4 11 9	3 10 10	5 9 9	3 14 2	2 6 9
Sibsagar, sadr	5 4 0	3 13 11	5 11 8	3 12 4	2 7 3
Jorhat	5 6 8	4 9 1	7 4 5	5 1 0	2 10 1
Golaghat	5 11 0	4 0 5	5 14 1	3 15 2	2 15 2
Lakhimpur, sadr	5 1 7	4 0 7	6 2 2	4 8 10	2 14 0
North Lakhimpur	4 12 0	3 14 3	5 0 8	3 9 8	1 15 0

It must be said that these figures are somewhat misleading, as the wages earned very much from month to month.

43. The table below shows separately the average wages paid to coolies during the manufacturing and non-manufacturing seasons, respectively:

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr ...	Manufacturing	5 4 6	4 1 3	5 8 0	4 8 0	2 12 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 8 0	3 8 0	5 0 0	4 0 0	2 8 0
Hailakandi ...	Manufacturing ...	4 12 1	3 11 1	5 3 0	4 5 2	2 6 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 3 9	3 5 2	4 9 3	3 6 8	2 1 5
North Sylhet ...	Manufacturing ...	4 3 6	2 13 2	4 7 4	3 2 7	2 0 2
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 8 1	2 15 4	5 2 4	3 3 4	2 4 9
South Sylhet ...	Manufacturing ...	5 4 2	3 13 11	4 15 10	3 7 6	2 2 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 14 8	3 12 10	4 11 8	3 7 0	1 13 7
Karimganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4 1 0	5 8 10	4 8 9	3 9 9	2 7 5
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 8	3 1 8	4 1 10	3 2 4	2 6 0
Habiganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4 10 1	3 5 5	5 6 7	4 1 9	2 2 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 1 8	3 0 11	4 14 9	3 6 9	1 14 6
Kamrup ...	Manufacturing ...	4 14 4	4 2 3	5 1 9	4 2 1	2 8 2
	Non-manufacturing ..	4 3 5	3 2 9	4 8 2	3 9 4	2 2 6
Darrang, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	4 6 7	3 13 4	5 4 0	3 7 9	2 4 10
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 5	3 4 1	4 14 3	2 12 11	2 1 6
Mangaldai ...	Manufacturing ...	4 13 10	3 12 1	6 0 10	3 11 8	1 14 5
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 1 11	2 13 10	5 11 0	3 4 3	1 12 1
Nowgong ...	Manufacturing ...	5 2 7	4 3 6	5 12 11	4 6 0	2 5 10
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 11	3 2 3	5 6 6	3 6 3	2 7 9
Sibsagar, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5 4 4	4 1 10	6 1 3	4 4 6	2 12 4
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 12 5	3 9 8	5 6 2	3 4 3	2 2 3
Jorhat ...	Manufacturing ...	5 2 10	4 6 0	6 0 1	4 11 0	2 15 6
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 13 0	4 0 0	5 10 3	3 12 2	2 1 0
Golaghat ...	Manufacturing ...	6 4 6	4 8 4	6 5 8	4 7 10	3 10 2
	Non-manufacturing ...	5 1 10	3 8 6	5 8 1	3 7 6	2 4 3
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5 3 4	4 1 4	6 3 4	4 10 9	2 1 6
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 10 2	3 9 10	5 10 5	4 5 0	2 12 7
North Lakhimpur ...	Manufacturing ...	4 13 7	4 0 11	5 8 0	3 12 10	2 2 5
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 10 4	3 11 7	4 9 5	3 6 9	1 11 7

The question of increasing the present minimum statutory rates of wages (which are Rs. 5 a month for men and Rs. 4 for women) is now under the consideration of the Legislature, and the Chief Commissioner deems it sufficient to add to what he has already written on the subject that the figures given in the above statement sufficiently show that even the minimum rate of wage is not, on an average, earned throughout the province, and that an increase in rates which shall ensure that an adequate wage shall be paid to a coolie entering into a penal contract for a fair day's work is imperatively called for, and that, in his opinion, none of the measures proposed are likely to attain this end so effectually as that which is adopted in the Bill before the Legislative Council of increasing the minimum rates of wage to Rs 6 and Rs. 5, respectively.

CHAPTER IV.

OFFENCES, INCLUDING DESERTIONS.

44. The following table gives particulars of cases filed during 1899 in which tea-planters or garden coolies were concerned:

Offences committed by tea-planters and garden coolies.

District.	Subdivision.	Non-fulfilment of contract under Act XIII of 1859. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Number of coolies sent to jail or fined.	Absence or desertion under Act I of 1882. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Garden sardar's failure to return, Act I of 1882. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Enticing coolies, Act I of 1882. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Intimidation, assault, or confinement by planters to compel coolies to enter into agreement or stay on garden. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Other offences by planters against coolies. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Unlawful assembly or rioting by coolies. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Assaults or insults by coolies on or to planters or their servants. Number of cases. Complaints.	Convictions.	Complaints or claims.	Number of coolies sentenced.	Thefts or burglaries, etc., by coolies. Number of cases. Convictions.
1	2	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
Cachar ...	Sadr ...	137	12	3	20	9	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	5	5	15	1	1	3	2
	Hailakandi ...	23	9	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Sylhet ...	North Sylhet ...	16	4	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Karimganj ...	16	5	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	12	...	2	2	10	1	...	3	3		
	South Sylhet ...	37	...	...	37	12	...	...	1	...	13	...	2	2	11	...	...	6	4		
	Habiganj ...	5	1	...	7	6	...	...	2	1	2	...	2	2	14	2	2	2	2		
Darrang ...	Sadr	8	7	...	31	24	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	13	...	...	6	6
	Mangaldai ...	15	11	1	11	4	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Nowgong ...	Sadr	2	2	...	12	7	5	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar ...	Ditto	9	2	...	60	27	...	...	4	3	...	...	...	...	1	1	5	...	...	32	15
	Jorhat	38*	33	5	61	23	35	3	5	4	1	1	2	1	4	4	27	1	1	13	6
	Golaghat	99	48	6	73	34	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	2	51	...	...	5	5
	Total	405	135	30*	324	159	48	8	13	9	20	3	10	1	18	18	146	5	4	67	30
Lakhimpur ...	Sadr	Details not given. In 187 cases under Act I of 1882, 219 coolies were convicted, and in 13 cases under Act XIII of 1859, 14 coolies were convicted.											...	10	2	3	3	26	4	4	18	16
	North Lakhimpur ...																				

* This includes three cases of coolies under contracts under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code.

No details of complaints under Act XIII of 1859 or Act I of 1882 have been furnished from the district of Lakhimpur. Excluding this district, of 719 complaints by managers of absence or desertion of coolies under Act XIII of 1859 or Act I of 1882, only 41 per cent. led to conviction, the proportion being much higher under the latter than under the former Act, owing to the large number of infructuous complaints filed under Act XIII in the Cachar and Sylhet districts. The commonest reason for the failure of complaints was that the deserter could not be traced. This was the case with 70 cases out of 137 in the sadr subdivision of the Cachar district, with 14 out of 23 complaints in the Hailakandi subdivision of this district, and with 35 out of 37 complaints filed in South Sylhet. It is worth noting that 16 cases were struck off in the Golaghat subdivision of the Sibsagar district, because the dependents intimated their willingness to return to their gardens and work off their contracts, as the permanent manager had returned. Very few coolies were sent to jail under Act XIII. Complaints against recruiting sardars for not returning to their gardens were of importance only in the Jorhat subdivision of Sibsagar. They were filed by several managers, but were mostly struck off, apparently because the deserting sardar could not be traced. There were only 13 cases in which persons were charged with enticement. In 30 cases, coolies were charged by garden managers with illegally resisting their authority by rioting, taking part in an unlawful assembly, assault, or insult, and in all but one of these cases, the defendants were convicted. In 21 cases of a serious complexion, 174 coolies were sentenced. Excluding the Lakhimpur district, in only 67 cases were coolies charged at the manager's instance with other offences under the Penal Code, and in 50 of these

conviction followed complaint. This certainly speaks well for the general orderliness of the coolie population.

Turning now to cases in which coolies were the complainants, in 29 cases managers were charged with using force or intimidation to procure the renewal of a contract, which is, of course, an offence requiring strict repression. Of these 29 cases, 26 occurred in the Sylhet district, and in only one of them did the Magistrate convict. The procedure appears from the information as yet received to have been open to serious objection, and the District Magistrate has been addressed on the subject. There were 10 other cases of complaints by coolies against planters, but only one led to conviction. A number of them were merely cross complaints of assault connected with cases in which coolies were charged with rioting.

In a later section of this report relating to the working of the immigration system generally will be found further observations on this subject and some account of the more important cases which occurred during the year.

Desertions.

45. The following table shows the number of desertions reported among the adult tea-garden population, district by district, for the past two years:

District.	Total desertions among adults.		Desertions among Act population.		Desertions among non-Act population.		Percentage of desertions on strength among					
							Act population.		Non-Act population.		Total adult population.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	3,182	2,699	330	338	2,852	2,391	3·48	10·74	3·38	3·04	3·38	3·36
Sylhet	6,028	4,300	740	527	5,288	3,773	6·08	5·41	7·08	5·28	6·94	5·07
Kamrup	370	328	52	32	318	296	7·16	5·47	15·82	14·33	13·94	12·49
Darrang	2,098	1,843	899	794	1,199	1,049	3·27	3·19	6·16	4·69	4·47	3·99
Nowgong	545	533	363	352	182	391	4·30	3·32	2·54	4·30	3·66	3·66
Sibsagar	2,511	2,150	1,231	1,044	1,280	1,106	2·95	2·44	3·14	2·64	3·05	2·54
Lakhimpur	3,035	2,954	1,589	1,243	1,446	1,681	3·47	2·71	3·68	4·28	3·57	3·43
Total	17,969	14,807	5,203	4,330	12,666	10,797	3·70	3·01	4·84	4·04	4·43	3·70

On the whole, there was a considerable decrease in the number of desertions. The coolie population during 1899 consisted, to a larger extent than usual, of seasoned labourers, who do not desert so freely as new arrivals. As noted in last year's report, Mr. Baker, Subdivisional Officer of the North Cachar Hills, was instructed to help in tracing coolies who deserted from gardens to work on the Assam-Bengal Railway. Many coolies were returned to their gardens, and their return served as a discouragement to intending deserters.

Arrests and convictions of deserters under Act contracts.

46. The following table shows for each district (1) the number of desertions of labourers under contract under Act I of 1882; (2) the number of warrants issued for the arrest of such deserters; (3) the number of such deserters arrested, and (4) the number convicted of desertion (section 175, Act I of 1882):

District.	Number of deserters (Act labourers).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested.					Number convicted.
			By warrant.	By manager.	By police.	By summons.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	338	34	3	4	3	...	10	9
Sylhet	327	37	3	16	2	...	21	21
Kamrup	32	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	704	99	18	16	...	4	38	37
Nowgong	232	7	1	6	...	...	7	4
Sibsagar	1,044	115	29	68	...	1	98	88
Lakhimpur	1,243	166	118	71	25	17	231	176
Total of 1899 ...	4,010	459	172	181	30	22	405	335
" " 1898 ...	5,303	414	113	232	19	6	730	350

47. The following table shows the manner in which complaints under Act XIII of 1859 were dealt with during the past two years:

Cases under Act XIII of 1859.

District.	Number of coolies convicted.		Number of coolies who were ordered to perform their contracts.		Number punished with imprisonment for—				Cases withdrawn.		Number of coolies ordered to pay their advances or pay compensation.	
					Two weeks or less.		More than two weeks.					
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	45*	22	28	16	4	3	11	3	2	25	...	...
Sylhet	17	10	14	8	...	...	1	2	45	...	2	...
Kamrup	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	8	18	6	17	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	...
Nowgong	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Sibsagar	75	83	68	71	7	...	9	11	1	23	1	1
Lakhimpur ...	14	14	13	14	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Total	160	149	120	128	11	4	22	16	48	49	5	1

* Includes two cases withdrawn.

Enquiries were made during the year into the complaints of tea-planters whose gardens lie along the Hill Tippera border that their Act-XIII coolies were being enticed across the frontier to develop Hill Tippera country. It was alleged that the Hill Tippera authorities gave no assistance in the recovery of such coolies by executing warrants. The Hill Tippera authorities denied that any enticement was practised to attract the coolies, and alleged that the execution of warrants was made difficult by the want of means of identifying the absconders. They suggested that, with each warrant for the arrest of a coolie, a person capable of indentifying the coolie should be sent to help the State police. The question was still under discussion at the close of the year.

Proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

48. The following table shows the proportion of desertions to labour force on healthy and unhealthy gardens:

District.	Mean strength.		Number of desertions.		Percentage of desertions to labour force.		
	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	124,086	1,340	3,344	57	2·69	4·25	2·71
Sylhet	143,005	145	5,878	12	4·11	8·27	4·11
Kamrup	2,752	1,084	275	213	9·99	19·64	12·72
Darrang	69,614	2,336	1,980	214	2·84	9·16	3·05
Nowgong	16,132	4,121	511	135	3·16	3·25	3·19
Sibsagar	142,531	4,136	2,703	278	1·95	6·72	2·09
Lakhimpur	124,861	4,012	3,774	96	3·02	2·39	3·00
Total	622,981	17,174	18,555	1,005	2·98	5·85	3·06
Total of 1898	*594,234*	*48,044*	*21,266*	*1,963*	*3·58*	*4·08*	*3·61*

There were proportionately about twice as many desertions from unhealthy as there were from healthy gardens. These "deserters" include non-Act coolies, many of whom are under no sort of agreement. Of the 213 deserters in Kamrup, for instance, only 5 were Act coolies.

49. The following table shows the punishment inflicted during the past two years on Act labourers for desertion from healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively:

Punishment for desertion in the case of healthy and unhealthy gardens, respectively.

	District.	Number of Act labourers convicted of the offence of desertion.		Number punished with imprisonment for—																			
				Two months.		Six weeks.		One month.		Three weeks.		Fifteen days.		Two weeks.		Ten days.		One week.		One day.		Others.	
		1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
From healthy gardens.	Cachar ...	10	9	...	...	...	...	2	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	5	5	...	...
	Sylhet ...	30	21	...	...	...	...	11	5	2	1	3	7	...	5	2	1	2	1	...	...	...	...
	Kamrup ...	8	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
	Darrang ...	49	35	...	...	...	...	11	4	16	...	2	14	13	3	...	...	4	3	...	7	13*	6*
	Nowgong ...	8	7	...	...	...	...	1	4	...	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	2†	...	1‡
	Sibsagar ...	71	67	...	1	...	...	6	6	1	4	...	3	17	9	13	8	23	25	4	6	6	6
	Lakhimpur ...	120	163	1	...	...	2	14	13	17	17	20	8	21	17	6	7	22	28	19	35	1	34§
	Total... ..	286	302	1	...	1	2	46	38	25	22	26	20	57	44	25	16	52	58	32	55	21	47
From unhealthy gardens.	Cachar ..	5	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Sylhet ...	17	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	2	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
	Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Darrang ...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2‖
	Nowgong ...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
	Sibsagar ...	17	...	...	...	...	...	3	2	...	...	...	...	3	1	1	...	7	3	...	1	...	...
	Lakhimpur ...	26	13	...	...	...	...	5	...	3	...	1	...	2	1	1	1	11	2	3	1	...	8
	Total	64	33	1	...	...	1	16	2	4	...	5	...	7	3	4	2	22	5	4	8	1	10

* Sent back to garden.
† Confined till the court rose.
‡ Fined Rs. 5.
§ This includes 2 persons who were allowed by the court to go to the garden and fulfil their contracts.
‖ One sent back to garden and one fined Rs. 5.

Nationality and sex of deserters.

50. The following table gives the nationality and sex of coolies who deserted:

	Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deserters.				Total.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among—					
			Act.		Non-Act.				Act labourers.		Non-Act labourers.		Total.	
			1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Bengal.	Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Men ...	1,663	1,442	2,136	2,174	3,999	3,716	4·56	3·91	4·31	4·18	3·46	3·04
		Women ...	628	614	1,534	1,177	2,162	1,791	1·71	1·73	3·09	2·38		
	Behar ...	Men ...	186	138	558	860	744	998	4·15	3·50	5·74	2·64	3·26	2·60
		Women ...	77	56	353	241	430	277	2·38	1·19	3·99	2·63		
	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	455	330	1,140	935	1,575	1,265	5·33	4·28	4·69	3·93	3·72	3·28
		Women ...	201	150	726	795	927	945	2·19	1·89	3·80	2·87		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.		Men ...	230	119	2,033	1,181	2,263	1,300	4·55	2·68	7·21	4·71	5·75	3·96
		Women ...	129	68	2,282	1,267	2,411	1,335	3·03	1·58	8·03	3·84		
Central Provinces ...		Men ...	916	596	690	663	1,606	1,258	7·00	5·08	8·69	7·25	6·53	4·97
		Women ...	401	263	436	521	837	784	3·50	2·45	5·61	5·51		
Madras ...		Men ...	101	86	139	87	240	173	3·64	3·30	4·94	2·91	3·45	2·56
		Women ...	32	34	101	69	133	103	1·57	1·75	3·48	2·18		
Assam ...		Men ...	68	21	905	768	973	789	4·78	2·41	11·63	8·65	11·66	7·16
		Women ...	15	1	286	158	302	159	1·79	0·20	10·16	5·52		
Total ...		Men ...	3,820	2,843	7,584	6,189	11,404	9,499	5·05	4·25	5·85	4·68	5·53	4·46
		Women ...	1,483	1,167	5,681	4,410	6,563	5,577	2·18	1·84	3·86	3·42	3·70	2·93
Grand total ...		.....	5,303	4,010	13,266	10,597	17,969	14,807	3·70	3·00	4·84	4·04	4·43	3·70

Percentages are not given for desertions of coolies from Bombay (2 females) or Nepal (41 males and 11 females), as the total number of coolies of these nationalities is very small.

There was a decrease in the proportion of deserters of every nationality. As in previous years, the highest proportion of deserters was among coolies from the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces.

CHAPTER V.

VITAL STATISTICS AND HEALTH OF GARDEN POPULATION.

51. The following table shows the registered birth-rate on tea gardens during the past two years:

Birth-rate.

District.	Birth-rate calculated on tea-garden population.		Birth-rate calculated on adult female population.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	20·3	26·3	65·3	85·0
Sylhet	19·5	26·8	62·6	86·3
Kamrup	31·6	32·0	90·4	91·8
Darrang	18·7	21·5	59·8	70·0
Nowgong	18·0	19·5	54·1	59·0
Sibsagar	23·7	27·2	80·8	92·7
Lakhimpur	25·0	28·2	78·6	88·1
Total	21·6	26·3	69·9	85·1

The improvement which took place in every district in the registered birth-rate is attributed by District Officers to the following causes:

(1) The year 1899 was a healthy one and was preceded by a healthy year.

(2) There was a smaller proportion of new immigrants than in previous years, and acclimatised immigrants are more healthy than new arrivals and consequently more prolific.

(3) As a result of the attention paid to the subject by inspecting officers, registration is said to have improved.

The birth-rate continues very low in Nowgong and Darrang. From Nowgong no satisfactory explanation is furnished. As regards Darrang, the Deputy Commissioner (Captain Cole) remarks:

Coolie women, on their first arrival in this province, have not, as a rule, sufficient vital force to enable them to reproduce their species with success. Mortality in child-birth is deplorably high, and there is a marked tendency to miscarriage, either natural or produced by artificial means. The whole of the woman's strength seems to be required to resist the insidious effects of the climate, and conception is too frequently followed by anæmia and dropsy.

Registration is no doubt very imperfect; but it may be added that the hard work on which coolie women are employed is not calculated to raise the birth-rate.

52. The following table distributes the births amongst the different nationalities, and shows the birth-rate among each class calculated on the mean strength of adult females:

Birth-rate according to nationality.

	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Behar.	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Central Provinces.	Madras.	Assam.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average strength of women under Act I or otherwise	88,023	12,118	35,762	33,254	20,122	5,186	3,375	197,965
Number of births	7,948	960	3,065	2,290	1,664	554	373	16,857
Birth-rate per 1,000	90·3	79·2	85·7	68·8	82·7	106·8	110·5	85·1
" " " (1898)	76·3	70·1	76·3	48·8	64·0	67·1	89·2	6·99

Births amongst females from Bombay (1) and Nepal (3) are not shown, as the total population of these nationalities is very small.

The birth-rate is the highest registered for any year since 1892, and it is satisfactory to note that it has improved in the case of every class of coolies.

Death-rate for the year.

53. Statistics of the mortality among all classes of the labouring population, including children, for the year and each half-year separately are given in the table below, with the corresponding figures for the previous year:

District.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children.						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half-year.		Second half-year.		Total.		First half-year.		Second half-year.			
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar ...	1,542	1,260	1,776	1,373	3,318	2,633	12·2	10·2	14·0	10·9	26·2	20·9
Sylhet ...	2,081	1,528	1,968	1,612	4,049	3,140	14·3	10·7	13·6	11·2	27·9	21·9
Kamrup ...	70	92	85	85	155	177	18·2	23·5	22·2	22·6	40·4	46·1
Darrang ...	1,087	1,141	1,237	1,278	2,324	2,419	15·0	16·0	17·4	17·6	32·4	33·6
Nowgong ...	427	432	520	432	947	864	19·5	21·1	24·3	21·5	43·8	42·6
Sibsagar ...	2,228	1,758	2,581	2,407	4,809	4,165	15·2	11·9	17·5	16·4	32·7	28·4
Lakhimpur ...	2,088	1,786	2,327	2,426	4,415	4,212	16·3	13·8	18·0	18·8	34·3	32·6
Total ...	9,523	7,997	10,494	9,613	20,017	17,610	14·8	12·5	16·3	15·0	31·1	27·5

Although there is room for improvement in the registration of deaths, they were registered at least as accurately as in previous years, and it is therefore very satisfactory to note that the death-rate is substantially lower than that of 1898, which was the lowest hitherto recorded. The healthiness of the year and the comparatively small proportion of new immigrants account for the low death-rate, as they do for the increase in the birth-rate. In Kamrup and Darrang, the death-rate was higher than in 1898. The former district possesses very few gardens, and the high death-rate is largely accounted for by the excessive unhealthiness of one of them, which has on that account been recently closed to Act labour. The increase in the registered death-rate in Darrang was due mainly to the more accurate registration of infant mortality. There was a slight decline in the death-rate of Act adults.

Death-rate amongst adults.

54. The following table shows the mortality amongst both Act and non-Act adult labourers during the past two years:

District.	Actual strength of total adult population of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.					
			Act.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	79,584	78,342	248	99	2,318	1,833	2,566	1,932	57·1	31·6	30·7	24·4	32·2	24·6
Sylhet	86,632	84,706	413	281	2,599	1,986	3,012	2,267	34·0	29·1	34·8	26·4	34·7	26·7
Kamrup	2,650	2,636	34	48	76	75	110	123	53·1	84·8	37·7	36·1	41·5	46·5
Darrang	46,906	47,248	1,385	1,222	413	614	1,798	1,836	30·4	49·1	21·2	27·4	38·3	38·8
Nowgong	14,878	13,833	452	408	287	254	739	662	58·7	59·6	39·9	36·3	49·6	47·8
Sibsagar	88,816	88,299	2,130	1,720	1,352	1,258	3,482	2,978	47·3	40·2	30·7	27·5	39·1	33·7
Lakhimpur	84,974	85,038	2,066	2,034	1,091	995	3,157	3,029	45·1	44·3	27·5	25·3	37·1	35·6
Total ...	404,446	400,105	6,728	5,812	8,136	7,015	14,864	12,827	47·0	43·6	31·1	26·3	36·7	32·0

Having regard to the fact that these figures relate to an adult population only, the rate of mortality for Act coolies, or 43·6 per thousand, although it shows an improvement over previous years, must be deemed to be excessive.

55. The following table gives the recorded causes of death among adult Act coolies during the past two years:

Causes of death among Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1899.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ancylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar ...	1899	3,202	25	15	20	10	23	4	2	99	31·6
	1898	4,364	35	45	50	20	85	20	3	248	57·1
Sylhet ...	1899	9,516	22	19	27	28	41	53	91	281	29·1
	1898	12,079	44	44	62	40	25	79	119	413	34·0
Kamrup ...	1899	965	8	...	5	18	9	...	8	48	84·8
	1898	639	2	3	3	6	9	2	9	34	53·1
Darrang ...	1899	24,862	101	45	260	86	297	159	235	1,221	49·1
	1898	27,452	102	80	366	111	297	178	251	1,385	50·4
Nowgong ...	1899	6,840	21	19	73	127	41	36	91	408	59·6
	1898	7,710	17	13	96	141	65	16	104	452	58·7
Sibsagar ...	1899	42,653	161	177	397	116	174	287	468	1,720	40·2
	1898	44,968	234	146	612	123	192	318	505	2,130	47·3
Lakhimpur ...	1899	45,837	137	186	443	176	384	184	534	2,034	44·3
	1898	45,781	151	161	532	209	368	135	510	2,066	45·1
Total ...	1899	133,484	465	511	1,234	561	919	723	1,369	5,811	43·6
	1898	142,993	585	492	1,721	640	1,041	748	1,501	6,728	47·0
	1897	140,824	1,295	633	2,175	779	887	759	1,901	8,389	59·7

Except for a small increase of 19 in the number of deaths from diarrhœa, there was a decline all round in the mortality from every form of disease.

56. The table below shows the recorded causes of death amongst non-Act adult coolies during each of the past two years:

Causes of death among non-Act labourers.

District.		Mean strength of non-Act coolies employed in 1899.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or *ancylostomiasis*.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	1899 ...	75,130	131	219	438	388	230	168	255	1,829	24·4
	1898 ...	73,200	307	375	658	405	262	160	112	2,312	30·7
Sylhet	1899 ...	75,190	100	183	502	311	108	254	236	1,986	26·4
	1898 ...	71,552	278	247	469	432	120	256	766	2,569	34·8
Kamrup	1899 ...	2,031	1	7	10	38	7	4	5	72	36·2
	1898 ...	2,011	3	3	6	30	5	3	14	64	31·7
Darrang	1899 ...	23,316	53	49	108	88	163	46	175	674	29·4
	1898 ...	19,252	21	79	59	86	69	23	76	413	21·2
Nowgong	1899 ...	6,984	11	6	24	131	14	17	52	254	36·3
	1898 ...	7,168	8	4	33	123	42	39	59	287	39·9
Sibsagar	1899 ...	45,646	102	131	217	101	87	176	455	1,268	27·5
	1898 ...	43,848	156	133	242	110	81	198	432	1,352	30·7
Lakhimpur	1899 ...	39,708	61	85	186	105	153	121	308	991	25·3
	1898 ...	39,163	89	78	218	117	117	80	390	1,091	27·5
Total	1899 ...	266,617	459	681	1,485	1,162	762	760	1,486	7,074	26·3
	1898 ...	261,144	904	919	1,698	1,303	676	759	1,851	8,110	30·1
	1897 ...	255,373	1,288	864	2,257	1,807	1,297	882	2,230	10,725	41·9

Although the registration of non-Act deaths is inaccurate and the above figures fall probably considerably short of the full mortality amongst such coolies, there can be

no doubt that the death-rate is really much lower than that among Act coolies. There are many reasons for this: the non-Act coolies generally belong to a better class and are better paid, but the principal reason undoubtedly is that they are ordinarily people who have become acclimatised before settling down as Act XIII or free coolies.

57. The following statement shows the causes of death and the death-rate amongst children (*i.e.*, from birth to 16 years of age) during each of the past two years:

Death-rate amongst children.

District.	Mean strength of children in 1899.	Deaths from								Annual ratio of deaths per mille.	
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Accidents of snake or animals.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.	Total deaths.	1899.	1898.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	47,084	130	56	148	105	118	101	43	701	751	14·8	16·0
Sylhet	58,141	19	72	99	361	21	59	315	873	1,037	14·9	17·9
Kamrup ...	1,510	...	2	5	30	4	2	53	94	46	46·1	30·3
Darrang ...	24,232	9	36	146	111	88	35	180	581	526	23·6	21·3
Nowgong ...	9,116	8	6	33	91	7	3	14	229	218	23·4	23·5
Sibsagar ...	58,368	39	139	285	247	26	86	361	1,187	1,337	20·3	23·0
Lakhimpur ...	43,835	24	98	230	253	11	113	311	1,183	1,268	26·9	29·3
Total of 1899 ...	240,011	229	409	956	1,199	387	396	1,983	4,783	...	19·8	...
" " 1898 ...	237,634	296	345	1,016	1,400	340	456	1,214	5,153	4,753	...	21·6

As pointed out on previous occasions, these figures show that the registration of children's deaths is very carelessly done, and particularly in the Surma Valley. Very little value can at present be attached to this statement.

58. The following statement illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies distributed according to nationality:

Mortality according to country of origin.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.		Deaths among adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.	
		1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bengal—Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	177,219	177,662	3,050	2,770	34·2	31·5
	Women ...			3,006	2,874		
Bengal—Behar ...	Men ...	26,708	25,861	520	335	34·5	22·4
	Women ...			401	247		
Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	69,313	67,206	970	809	28·7	25·7
	Women ...			1,019	921		
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.	Men ...	67,604	64,159	1,454	1,075	41·4	34·1
	Women ...			1,342	1,116		
Central Provinces ...	Men ...	40,216	40,926	1,456	1,146	65·0	55·6
	Women ...			1,158	1,133		
Madras	Men ...	10,507	10,772	164	128	31·0	27·2
	Women ...			162	167		
Assam	Men ...	12,520	13,189	90	68	12·4	10·2
	Women ...			65	67		
Total	Men ...	205,391	202,139	7,709	6,338	37·5	31·3
	Women ...	199,055	197,966	7,155	6,489	35·9	32·7
Grand total ...	.....	404,446	400,105	14,864	12,827	36·7	32·0

N. B.—The deaths among coolies from Bombay (1 male and 2 females) and Nepal (6 males and 2 females) are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is small.

The improvement noted in the report for 1898 in the death-rates of coolies from the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces is continuing. Although the death-rate amongst the latter class continues to be lamentably high, it is lower than in any year since 1892, the first year in which statistics for Central Provinces coolies were given separately.

Proportion of unhealthy gardens.

59. The following statement shows the number and proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district during the last two years. Gardens are classed as unhealthy on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., and the number of deaths from which the average is struck is not less than 10:

District.	Total number of gardens.		Number of unhealthy gardens.		Percentage of unhealthy gardens.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar	188	186	4	1	2·1	0·5
Sylhet	138	135*	7	1	5·0	0·7
Kamrup	30	30	2	3	6·6	10·0
Darrang	91	98	6	6	6·5	6·1
Nowgong	50	49	8	8	16·0	16·3
Sibsagar	168	169	16	7	9·5	4·1
Lakhimpur	150	154	12	5	8·0	3·2
Total	815	821	55	31	6·7	3·7

* This figure does not include Dona and Natwanpur tea gardens, which submit returns to Cachar, and Panchas tea garden, which does not submit Returns Nos. 50 and 51.

Previous to 1883, only those gardens were placed on the unhealthy list which were unhealthy in respect of the total population. For the purpose of comparison, the following table is added, showing the number of unhealthy gardens in each district during the years 1882 to 1899, *i.e.*, since Act I of 1882 came into force, classified according to the method in force before 1889:

District.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Cachar	3	5	9	1	10	7	7	12	1	5	8	3	3	...	2	10	...	...
Sylhet	...	14	15	18	13	5	4	10	1	3	3	...	...	...	...	5	1	..
Kamrup	2	2	3	3	...	...	2	1	6	4	5	1	1	1	...	...	...	1
Darrang	14	14	14	9	8	10	12	10	9	5	12	...	...	3	2	4	..	1
Nowgong	16	24	16	3	4	2	1	6	2	3	5	5	7	...	1	...	...	1
Sibsagar	7	11	25	5	15	10	23	16	11	6	14	11	6	2	...	5	...	2
Lakhimpur	15	13	11	5	14	15	17	12	5	4	8	4	5	5	5	15	7	4
Total	57	73	93	43	64	49	65	67	28	30	55	14	21	11	10	39	8	9

60. In the following paragraphs a detailed account is given of the gardens which were unhealthy in each district, of the causes of mortality, and of the action taken by the Chief Commissioner in each case.

It should be understood that the figures given in the statements which follow refer only to that portion of the labour force of each garden in respect of which the garden was unhealthy. The death-rate for the year (column 5) is the sum of the death-rates for each half-year taken separately, and calculated on the mean labour force of the half-year.

61. *CACHAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, of cooliesof anky lostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	Urunabund ...	126	10	72·6	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
Non-Act ,, ...	*Nil.*										
Act and non-Act populations taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Urunabund.*—The garden was healthy in 1898. The total number of deaths on Act population in 1899 was 10, showing a death-rate of just over 7 per cent. The Chief Commissioner has approved the action of the Deputy Commissioner in directing the manager of the garden to carry into effect the Civil Surgeon's recommendations in the matter of hospital accommodation and water-supply. A committee will be held in the garden if it again appears on the unhealthy list.

The following action was taken in 1899 in respect of a garden which was unhealthy in 1898:

(*a*) *Burthal.*—A committee was held on the garden on the 7th September 1899. In view of the improved state of the garden and low mortality in 1899 up to the date of the holding of the committee, the Chief Commissioner accepted the committee's recommendation that no action need be taken

62. *SYLHET*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Dysentery.	Diarrhœa.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	*Nil.*										
Non-Act population ...	Kalinagar	145	13	86·6	...	6	...	2	...	...	5
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

Kalinagar.—The death-rate for 1899 was very high, the mortality being apparently due to defects in the water-supply. The Deputy Commissioner has been asked to request the manager of the garden to have *pucca* wells sunk without delay. In view of the low wages earned by the coolies of this garden, it has also been pointed out to the Deputy Commissioner that, unless the conditions of the garden improve, the coolies cannot reasonably be held to be bound by their contracts under Act XIII.

The following action was taken in 1899 in respect of the gardens noted below, which were unhealthy in 1898:

(*a*) *Malnicherra.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 28th June 1899. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet was requested to call upon the

manager to remedy the defects pointed out by the Civil Surgeon in the sanitary and medical arrangements of the garden. The manager's attention was drawn to the inadequacy of the labour force.

(*b*) *Kewacherra.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 16th March 1899. No special action was considered necessary, as suggestions made at previous inspections had been carried into effect.

(*c*) *Baramchal.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 11th September 1899. His report disclosed that the garden had been left temporarily without a native medical officer. It was requested that there should be no unnecessary delay in filling up the vacancy.

(*d*) *Baitakhal.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 27th June 1899. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to ask the manager to carry out the improvements recommended by the Civil Surgeon.

(*e*) *Tilbheom and* (*f*) *Langai.*—These gardens were inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 29th and 26th June 1899. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to ask the managers of the gardens to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendation.

(*g*) *Adamtila.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 25th June 1899. No special action was considered necessary.

63. *KAMRUP*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or early splenomegaly.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Amchong ...	246	25	101·2	3	...	4	11	4	...	3
Non-Act population...	2. Kamarkuchi ...	139	26	188·0	...	2	4	18	1	...	1
	3 Chandrapur ...	125	11	87·6	2	...	2	7	...	...	...
	Total (non-Act) ...	264	37	140·1	2	2	6	25	1	...	1
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Amchong.*—This garden was unhealthy also in 1898. The recommendations of two Civil Surgeons to abandon and burn down the old coolie lines and to house the coolies in huts built on an entirely different site were tried, but *kalá-ázár*, which appears to be deeply rooted in the garden, did not abate in virulence to any appreciable extent. As it is impossible to hold coolies to their contracts, under penal sanctions, on an estate which is badly infected with *kalá-ázár*, the Chief Commissioner declared, under section 132 of Assam Labour and Emigration Act, this garden to be unfit for the residence of labourers generally, and directed it to be closed to such labourers.

(2) *Kamarkuchi and* (3) *Chandrapur.*—These are small gardens on which there is no Act labour, and no special action was considered necessary. From the Civil Surgeon's inspection reports, it appeared that the importance of clearing jungle well back from the coolie lines had not been sufficiently recognised. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has been requested to impress on the garden managers to regard the matter as one of the first importance.

64. *DARRANG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, cachexia and debility.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. New-Addabari	257	30	116·7	1	1	9	...	8	5	6
	2. Paisajuli	141	10	70·9	...	...	5	1	3	...	1
	3. Singri	119	24	201·6	...	...	16	2	1	...	5
	4. Kabira	70	35	500·0	1	1	6	...	24	...	3
	5. Orangajuli	323	24	74·3	6	2	...	2	2	5	7
	Total (Act)	911	123	135·1	8	4	36	5	38	10	22
Non-Act population	6. Gholraili	282	20	70·9	...	3	3	3	3	1	8
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *New-Addabari.*—The Civil Surgeon's inspection report was incomplete, and was returned to the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, for having certain omissions filled in. Orders will be passed by the Chief Commissioner on receipt of the Commissioner's further report.

(2) *Paisajuli.*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden. The high mortality among Act labourers during 1899 was due to the importation of a bad class of labourers. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has been requested to warn the manager of the garden to be careful in his selection of coolies.

(3) *Singri.*—The high death-rate on this garden during the year 1899 was due to the outbreak of an epidemic of dysentery. Out of 24 deaths, 21 were among coolies from the Central Provinces. This garden, which was opened out only three years ago, is evidently not suited to these coolies, and the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, has been requested to warn the manager not to import them. Seeing that, in addition to the high rate of mortality, the wages earned by Act labourers were very low, and a considerable number of coolies had deserted, the Chief Commissioner did not feel satisfied as to the management, and decided to await the next inspection report, when he hopes to see a much more liberal account of wages paid. When wages are stinted, the management cannot plead that mortality has been due to unavoidable circumstances.

(4) *Kabira.*—At the beginning of the year 1899 there were 74 Act labourers on this garden, and 31 Act labourers were imported during the year, but at the time (2nd March 1900) of the Civil Surgeon's inspection, only 27 remained. The rest had deserted or died. The number of deaths among Act labourers during the year 1899 was said to have been 35; but as no registers were kept up until July, this figure could not be relied upon. The present manager came to the garden in July, after which month 25 deaths occurred. The Civil Surgeon in his report gave no explanation of the extremely low wages of Act women in two months—September 1899 and February 1900,—the former being a month when women usually earn high wages for plucking. Under the circumstances, the Chief Commissioner declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden is unfit for the residence of imported labourers, and directed that it should be closed to such labourers. The labourers now under contract have been informed that their contracts have terminated so far as they bind them to work in this garden.

(5) *Orangajuli.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1898. The previous recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon have been carried out. In view of the general improvement in the health of the coolies, the Chief Commissioner decided to await the Civil Surgeon's report on his second inspection of the garden.

(6) *Ghoiralli.*—This garden was unhealthy on non-Act population owing to the large number of deaths among children. The Chief Commissioner agreed with the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that no special action was necessary.

The following action was taken in 1899 in respect of the garden mentioned below, which was unhealthy in 1898:

(*a*) *Dolupadong.*—Under the orders reproduced in the Provincial Immigration Report for 1898, this garden was closed to the importation of new Act coolies. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 28th October 1899, and the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, in forwarding the Civil Surgeon's report, recommended that the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang should be authorised to re-open the garden to the importation of such labourers as he and the Civil Surgeon think it has now become fit for. As the death-rate from the 1st of January 1899 up to the 28th October 1899 was 6 per cent. among Act labourers and 5·3 per cent. among non-Act coolies, the Chief Commissioner decided to await the results of mortality for the second half-year of 1899 before passing orders.

65. *NOWGONG*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cerebral or spinal hæmorrhage.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Barpani	64	20	304·3	...	...	1	19	...	...	...
	2. Sukimbari (Sakunbari)	116	17	147·7	...	...	...	8	...	1	8
	3. Kondoli	138	34	246·3	3	3	1	21	...	...	6
	4. Balijuri ...	75	11	158·7	...	...	3	6	...	...	3
	5. Amjuckie ...	261	22	85·3	...	1	9	7	1	...	3
	6. Messa ...	137	39	284·6	1	3	8	3	...	...	4
	Total (Act)	901	183	203·1	4	7	22	74	1	1	24
Non-Act population	7. Rongbong ...	154	25	154·0	...	1	1	23	...	...	...
Act and non-Act population taken together ...	8. Owgari ...	71	12	180·2	...	...	...	9	2	...	1

(1) *Barpani.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1895, 1897, and 1898. The unhealthiness in 1899 was due chiefly to *kalá-ázár*. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 12th December 1899, and the Chief Commissioner ordered its closure to new importation of Act labour. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 5th May 1900. As it was suffering so severely from *kalá-ázár*, the Chief Commissioner found it impossible to hold the coolies under penal contract, and therefore declared, under section 132 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, that the garden was unfit for the residence of Act labourers generally, and directed that it should be closed to such labourers.

(2) *Sukimbari (Sakunbari).*—This garden has been continuously unhealthy since 1897. It was ordered that it should be closed to new importations of Act labour.

(3) *Kondoli.*—This garden was unhealthy also in 1898. The high death-rate in 1899 was due to *kalá-ázár*. It was directed that further importation of Act labour to this garden should be stopped until fresh coolie lines are constructed in place of those tainted from *kalá-ázár*.

(4) *Balijuri*—This is ordinarily a healthy garden, and had not been unhealthy for many years past. The unhealthiness in 1899 was due chiefly to *kalá-ázár*, and the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, was asked to consider the desirability of destroying

houses which are tainted with this disease. The inadequacy of the labour force of the garden was also pointed out. As the past record of the garden was good, the Chief Commissioner decided to await a further report before passing orders.

(5) *Amluckie.*—This garden wast last unhealthy in 1892. No special action was considered necessary beyond drawing attention to the lowness of the wages earned by the coolies, and directing that the *kalá-ázár*-infected coolie lines should be pulled down, and that the coolies suspected of being infected with *kalá-ázár* should be housed in temporary *bashas*.

(6) *Messa.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and had not been unhealthy for many years past. No special action was considered necessary.

(7) *Rengbeng.*—This garden is worked entirely by non-Act coolies, and has been continuously unhealthy since 1897. The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, has been requested to make it clear to the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong that, while this garden is so unhealthy, there must be no coercion of coolies under Act XIII of 1859.

(8) *Owguri.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897, but healthy in 1898. The high mortality in 1899 was due chiefly to *kalá-ázár*. As the manager of the garden has built new lines, the Chief Commissioner decided to defer passing any orders for the present.

66. *SIBSAGAR*—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Tingaibam	317	26	82·4	2	2	16	...	2	...	2
	2. Borhat	115	18	200·1	...	...	10	...	7	...	1
	3. Nagadhuli	308	26	84·5	...	5	7	1	...	...	13
	4. Bandersalia	101	11	106·2	...	...	5	1	1	1	3
	Total (Act)	841	81	96·3	3	7	38	2	10	1	20
Non-Act population	5. Thorajan	168	17	100·7	...	...	1	5	1	1	9
Act and non-Act population taken together.	6. Dehingapar	852	83	97·6	13	4	24	8	6	3	25
	7. Nagera	226	34	146·9	1	3	8	5	4	1	12
	Total (Act and non-Act)	1,068	115	109·5	14	7	32	13	10	4	37

(3) *Nagadhuli.*—This garden has been continuously unhealthy since 1897. The Chief Commissioner directed, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that a committee should be held on the garden under section 128A(*b*) of Act I of 1882.

(4) *Bandersulia.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1893, 1894, 1895, 1898, and 1899. The Civil Surgeon found no fault with any of the arrangements of the garden, and reported that the unhealthiness of 1899 was not due to importation of new gangs of coolies. As there was a distinct improvement in the condition of the garden, no special action was considered necessary beyond pointing out certain defects.

(5) *Thurajan.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and had not been unhealthy for many years past. No special action was necessary beyond asking the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, to have the garden inspected again.

(6) *Dehingapar.*—This garden was last unhealthy in 1897. The high mortality in 1899 was principally due to bowel-complaints, which were attributed by the Civil Surgeon to a defect in the water-supply. No special action was considered necessary beyond requesting the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts to ask the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to make an enquiry into the causes of the large number (29) of desertions.

(7) *Nagora.*—The high death-rate in 1899 was attributed by the Civil Surgeon to the garden being a new one. The Chief Commissioner accepted the suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that a second inspection of the garden should be made under section 130 of Act I of 1882 towards the close of the rains.

The Civil Surgeon's inspection reports on the remaining two unhealthy gardens had not been received at the time when this report was sent to Press, and the action taken by the Chief Commissioner with regard to them will, therefore, be recorded in the report for the year 1900.

67. *LAKHIMPUR—*

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of estate.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Tara	527	56	106·2	9	9	15	1	5	12	4
	2. Bordobi	345	42	121·7	...	6	13	6	...	5	12
	3. Naharkutia	276	21	76·0	2	...	9	2	...	5	3
	4. Nahartoli	314	28	89·1	1	1	2	...	...	7	17
	Total (Act)	1,462	147	100·5	12	16	40	9	5	29	36
Non-Act population	5. Deomali	300	25	83·3	...	3	2	7	1	5	7
Act and non-Act population taken together...	*Nil.*										

(1) *Tara.*—This garden was opened in 1896, and was unhealthy in 1898. The high mortality in 1899 was due to the weakly character of the labour force. The Civil Surgeon's inspection report disclosed certain defects, and the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur was requested to make a special inspection of the garden to enquire into them. It was decided to await the special report before passing orders.

(2) *Bordobi.*—This is a new garden opened in 1898, and was unhealthy in that year. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 6th December 1899 and on the 30th March 1900, and a committee was held on the garden on the 12th June 1900. No special action was considered necessary beyond approving certain orders passed by the committee regarding the sanitary improvements of the garden.

(3) *Naharkutia.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897, but healthy in 1898, and again appears on the unhealthy list for 1899. The Chief Commissioner has approved the proposal made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that the manager of the garden should be requested to carry out certain recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon, and that he should be warned that if he failed to do this, the garden would receive no further consideration, should it continue unhealthy.

(4) *Naharlotli.*—This garden was last unhealthy in 1895. The Civil Surgeon's inspection report disclosed many defects, and the Chief Commissioner has allowed time for action on the Civil Surgeon's recommendations. If the management does not improve, the advisability of freeing the coolies from their engagements will be considered, as the labourers' interests appear to be much neglected on this garden.

(5) *Deomuli.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1898. No special action was considered necessary beyond asking the management to give effect to the Civil Surgeon's recommendations.

The following action was taken in 1899 in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1898:

(*a*) *Dekajuli.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 15th December 1899. The Chief Commissioner accepted the suggestion made by the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, and authorised the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur to grant a certificate, under section 133 of Act I of 1882, re-opening the garden to the importation of Act labourers, provided that certain recommendations of the Civil Surgeon are carried out.

(*b*) *Namrup.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 16th December 1899. The Chief Commissioner accepted the suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, and authorised the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur to grant a certificate, under section 133 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, re-opening the garden to the importation of Act labour.

(*c*) *Makum.*—The Principal Medical Officer and Sanitary Commissioner, Assam, visited this garden on 30th November 1899, and recorded certain strictures on the medical and sanitary arrangements on the garden, which were communicated to the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. The garden was subsequently inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 20th December 1899, and his inspection report showed that the Principal Medical Officer's strictures had been met by very substantial improvement. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, decided that a special enquiry by a committee was unnecessary.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPECTION.

Number of gardens liable to inspection.

68. At the beginning of the year 1899 there were 858 gardens on the register. The number of gardens on the Cachar register decreased by 41, 40 being estates on which no coolies were employed which were included in the list for 1898. One garden was closed and four gardens amalgamated with others in Sylhet. In Darrang, the Tezpur saw-mill was struck off the list, as it no longer employs Act labour, and eight new gardens were opened. One garden in Nowgong employing no coolies was struck off the register. In Sibsagar one and in Lakhimpur three new gardens were opened, and one old garden in Lakhimpur was re-opened, leaving 823 gardens in the register for the province at the end of the year.

Classification of gardens according to the coolies employed and inspection of Act and non-Act gardens.

69. The following statement shows the number of gardens classified, district by district, according to the classes of labourers employed the number which submitted returns, and the number which were inspected during the year:

—	Cachar.					Sylhet.					Kamrup.					Darrang.				
		Non-Act.					Non-Act.					Non-Act.					Non-Act.			
	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Number of gardens	75	111	1	2	189	71	59	4	...	134	8	6	2	14	30	89	3	4	2	98
,, sending Returns Nos. 50 and 51	75	111	1	...	187	71	59	3	...	133	8	6	2	...	16	89	3	4	...	96
,, inspected once	50	109	1	...	160	65	59	...	...	122	7	5	...	...	12	80	3	...	...	83
,, ,, twice	3	2	...	...	5	3	...	...	...	3	1	1	...	...	2	5	...	...	...	5
,, ,, thrice	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
,, ,, four times	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Total number inspected in 1899 ...	73	110	1	...	184	67	59	...	...	126	8	6	...	...	14	83	3	...	...	86
,, ,, ,, in 1898 ...	104	82	2	...	188	72	63	2	...	137	8	6	...	...	14	80	4	...	...	84

—	Nowgong.					Sibsagar.					Lakhimpur.					Total.				
		Non-Act.					Non-Act.					Non-Act.					Non-Act.			
	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Over 50.	Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
Number of gardens	30	8	2	9	49	143	16	...	10	169	131	7	...	16	154	547	210	12	53	823
,, sending Returns Nos. 50 and 51	30	8	2	...	40	143	16	...	...	159	131	7	...	...	138	547	210	12	...	769
,, inspected once	22	8	...	...	30	135	16	...	...	130	119	6	...	...	118	477	200	1	...	684
,, ,, twice	7	...	...	...	7	29	...	...	...	29	26	...	...	...	26	64	8	...	...	95
,, ,, thrice	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	5	6	...	...	...	6
,, ,, four times	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
Total number inspected in 1899 ...	30	8	...	...	38	152	16	...	...	168	150	6	...	...	156	538	208	1	...	747
,, ,, ,, in 1898 ...	30	10	...	...	40	130	16	...	...	155	114	9	1	...	124	547	170	5	...	722

Inspection.

70. Seven hundred and fifty-seven gardens were liable to inspection as employing Act coolies or more than 50 non-Act coolies. Of these, 746 were inspected, and one garden which employed less than 50 labourers was also inspected. Of the 11 gardens liable to inspection, which remained uninspected, three were in the district of Cachar, and no explanation has been given by the Deputy Commissioner of the neglect to inspect them. Four gardens of one Company were left uninspected in Sylhet through a mistake. All gardens were inspected in Kamrup, Nowgong, and Sibsagar. In Darrang one garden and in Lakhimpur two gardens remained uninspected. The estate entered in the return as uninspected in Sibsagar was the Marangial saw-mill, which was inspected under the Factories Act.

Gardens inspected twice or oftener.

71. Fifty-six gardens were inspected twice, six three times, and one, the Borjuli garden in Darrang, was inspected four times, twice by the Civil Surgeon and twice by the District Superintendent of Police.

72. The following table shows the number of gardens inspected, respectively, by Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Civil Surgeons, and other inspecting agency :

District.	Deputy Commissioners.		Assistant Commissioners.		Civil Surgeons.		Other inspecting agency.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	25	45	43	47	40	50	70	42
Sylhet	10	9	115	107	17	9	4	6
Kamrup	12	11	...	...	2	2	...	...
Darrang	11	31	26	32	19	13	28	21
Nowgong	27	24	...	...	24	23	3	...
Sibsagar	38	20	88	102	28	44	1	11
Lakhimpur	29*	39*	31	43	52	45	52	41
Total	152	179	303	331	182	186	158	121

* This includes 5 joint inspections by the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING OF THE SYSTEM GENERALLY.

Relations between employers and labourers.

73. District Officers were requested to dwell on the subject of the relations between coolies and their employers, at greater length and detail than usual, in their reports for 1899, and 34 cases of conflict between employers or their officers and labourers or between labourers themselves have been mentioned in the district reports. The majority of these disturbances were, however, very trivial, and they afford no indication of the existence of any general dissatisfaction of coolies with their managers, relations between whom were on the same good footing as in previous years. The districts which reported the largest number of cases were Sylhet (12), Sibsagar (12), and Cachar (5). Cases in which managers or their Babus are complainants almost invariably have their origin in the dissatisfaction of the labour force at some change introduced in well-established methods of work by a new manager. Occasionally a coolie who has a grievance against the manager on account of stopped pay or a suspicion of interference with his women induces other coolies to join him in an assault on the manager. Cases brought by coolies against managers were either cases of assault (in the Karimganj subdivision there were 4 of these) or of attempted rape. The Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, who regards the "wave of unrest" on tea gardens so much discussed in certain sections of the press as a myth, says:—

> A constant source of friction on some gardens is the occurrence of disputes as to whether Act-XIII agreements have expired or not;

and recommends, among other things, that these contracts should invariably be written.

This is a sound suggestion. The Chief Commissioner is obliged to add that the working of Act XIII is a source of considerable anxiety to the Administration.

The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, in whose district, containing 72,000 coolies, there were only two cases, reports:

> The supply of labour is now so restricted and the cost of importation is so heavy, that one of the principal duties of a manager is to secure the confidence of his employes, and to succeed in attaching them to the garden, and agents and directors regard with but scanty favour a planter who cannot pull with his labour force.

A brief account is given below of some of the more important cases:

In June Mr. Falckytter, a new assistant manager in Cachar, kicked a coolie, who was digging a hole to plant a post for a house. The coolie's spleen was ruptured and he died. Mr. Falckytter was tried and acquitted by the Sessions Judge. While the trial was pending, Mr. Falckytter, who appears to have been a hasty-tempered man and unsympathetic with his coolies, had another dispute with some of them and was ruthlessly beaten. In three other cases in Cachar managers or their Babus had more or less serious encounters with their coolies.

In May Mr. Bellwood, the manager of the Nadua tea estate in Lakhimpur district, was seriously assaulted with sticks by six coolies of his estate instigated by a girl who alleged that Mr. Bellwood had outraged, or wanted to outrage, her. Mr. Bellwood was so badly beaten that his condition was for some time critical. The persons who committed the assault were sentenced to two years' imprisonment each.

In the same district in March Mr. Cumming, the manager of the Rangliting tea estate, administered a severe flogging to a boy, who died three days afterwards. The Civil Surgeon's deposition, in the Deputy Commissioner's opinion, showed that the whipping had nothing to do with the boy's death, and Mr. Cumming was sentenced to a nominal fine for causing hurt. The Judge of the Assam Valley Districts called for the record of the case, but did not think that it was necessary to take further proceedings. The Chief Commissioner took a more serious view of the offence and considered the punishment altogether inadequate, but, in view of the Judge's decision, was not prepared to re-open the case.

There were in Sibsagar and Sylhet several cases of new managers being mobbed by their coolies on account of some change in the method of work or pay. Coolies are exceedingly conservative, and strongly resent any change in the system of working the garden.

The relations between tea-planters and their employés cannot but form a source of constant anxiety to the Chief Commissioner, and it is necessary to maintain an attitude of perpetual watchfulness in regard to them. But too much weight must not be attached to two or three isolated cases of importance which have come to notice. Mr. Cotton's views on the general question are well expressed by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, who devoted particular attention to the labour problem in Assam. He wrote in the Immigration Report for 1887:

As regards the relations between the employers and labourers generally, Mr. Fitzpatrick is as yet unable to say much, but he has made it a point during the short time he has been here to enquire carefully into every case, whether brought to notice in the press or otherwise, in which there has been the slightest suggestion of a cause of complaint on either side, and he feels bound to say that, so far as he has gone, he sees no reason to dissent from the opinions expressed by his predecessors on this point. With about 900 gardens employing upwards of 323,000 hands, there must, of course, be a certain proportion of bad men, perhaps even of thoroughly depraved men, both among the employers and the coolies. There must be a certain amount of harshness and oppression, at times possibly even of downright cruelty, on the one side, and of turbulence, conspiracies, and maliciously-concocted charges on the other. This unfortunately is human nature, as displayed among all classes of men, and happily we have criminal courts strong enough to deal with it. But, speaking generally, the relations between the employers and the labourers seem to be fairly good.

In the Report for 1888, after a year's further experience, Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick deliberately repeated his own words. The only modification Mr. Cotton can make in them is that the labour population has now nearly doubled, and that opportunities for friction and collision have, therefore, proportionately increased; but his own observation (which is now considerable, for he has made three prolonged tours in the tea districts, and, like his predecessors, he has examined every case which has come to his notice) enables him to emphatically confirm the conclusion at which his predecessor arrived. The Chief Commissioner does not believe that the occurrence of the particular cases which have been reported this year indicates that there is anything seriously wrong in the conditions of the tea industry, or that any special remedial measures are called for. On the whole, he thinks it is creditable to the European management that cases of collision should be so few. He observes as a symptom of the times that there is a growing tendency among the coolie class to resent a blow by striking a blow in return, and this soon leads to serious results, as the coolies act in combination among themselves, and are armed with formidable weapons—the implements of their industry; but this very tendency exercises a healthy influence in restraining the hot-headed and impetuous European assistant from raising his hand against them. The Chief Commissioner is not so sanguine as to look forward to the day when young Englishmen will altogether abandon the regrettable habit of giving a cuff or even a kick or a blow with a cane to natives of the labouring classes, but this habit among tea-planters is undoubtedly on the wane, and is probably less common among them than among other members of the European community, for their action is tempered by self-interest, which enjoins both prudence and patience in their dealing with their employés. There is substantially no change in the class of managers employed or in the class of coolies imported.

Having said so much, the Chief Commissioner desires to add a word with reference to the sentences which are ordinarily inflicted on coolies and others when they are convicted of assaulting, or threatening to assault, their managers. There is a strong feeling among tea-planters that the sentences now passed by Magistrates are inadequate. Mr. Cotton does not share this view: on the contrary, he finds that sentences now passed are generally more severe than they were formerly—in some cases they have seemed to him to be unduly severe,—and he has not come across any case of this kind in which he considers that an insufficient penalty has been imposed. The position of Magistrates in a planting district is always a difficult one, but, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, the balance of justice in Assam is not unfairly held, though there is a tendency too often to minimise the gravity of an offence when a European is the aggressor.

Relations between the garden population and the villagers.

74. Two cases of friction between managers and the neighbouring *raiyats* are reported from the Surma Valley.

In the Hailakandi subdivision a case, which caused considerable interest at the time, occurred, in which Mr. Ross, the manager of the Mohanpur tea estate, had a dispute with some villagers on account of their taking forest-produce from what he thought was, but what really was not, his garden land. He was set on by a crowd of villagers and was beaten, and, in using his revolver in defence, shot one villager dead and wounded another. He was committed to take his trial for murder before the High Court at Calcutta, but

was acquitted. Mr. Ross subsequently brought a charge of assault against the villagers, who had beaten him, but did not proceed with it, and the accused were acquitted.

The other case of friction was that of a manager in South Sylhet, who was fined Rs. 100 for cutting thatching-grass on land belonging to a neighbour.

75 The average number of coolies per 100 acres of tea under cultivation was 120, which is lower than in any year since 1894. The average number of coolies per 100 acres is shown in the table below for every year since 1883:

Year.	Area under tea cultivation.	Total adult labour force (annual mean), Act and non-Act.	Number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea.
	Acres.		
1883	189,453	153,739	81
1884	189,852	177,622	93
1885	197,510	188,262	95
1886	203,993	192,076	94
1887	211,079	203,023	96
1888	216,676	219,861	101
1889	227,249	241,297	106
1890	231,038	250,113	108
1891	241,823	265,315	109
1892	247,192	283,819	114
1893	254,126	302,558	119
1894	268,796	310,767	115
1895	276,014	334,298	121
1896	291,909	366,460	125
1897	310,550	402,205	129
1898	325,823*	404,446	124
1899	331,151	400,105	120

* Revised figures.

The decrease in the number of labourers employed against an increase in the area under tea cultivation is obviously an unsatisfactory symptom of the tea industry.

Settlement of time-expired labourers on the land.

76. The following table shows the area of Government land taken up by time-expired coolies during the past two years and also in 1880, 1885, and 1890:

District.	Area settled direct with time-expired coolies in				
	1880.	1885.	1890.	1898.	1899.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cachar	1,467	423	7,133	12,013	12,578
Sylhet	...*	83	300	257	117
Kamrup	56	14	42	244	179
Darrang	1,254	3,063	7,454	17,780	22,436
Nowgong	77	520	1,895	5,409	6,713
Sibsagar	990	1,856	10,639	19,700	22,466
Lakhimpur	740	2,237	4,897	17,294	19,458
Total	4,584	8,196	32,360	72,697	83,947

* Information not available.

This does not include land held by coolies as sub-tenants of managers or of *raiyats* throughout the province or under *mirasdars* in Cachar and Sylhet. A considerable increase took place in the area held by time-expired coolies in the Upper Assam districts of Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur. The Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong attributes the increase to the encouragement given to extend cultivation by the good harvests recently obtained. The extension of cultivation by time-expired coolies

in Darrang proceeds in a very satisfactory manner. The Commissioner remarks on this district:

> The whole of Tezpur subdivision is one vast colonisation scheme in active progress through the tea industry. Of the total settled area of the subdivision, 56 per cent. is settled with tea-planters, and the area of *khiraj* land settled with immigrants, chiefly *ex*-tea immigrants, is now 23 per cent. of the whole settled *khiraj* area. *Ex*-tea immigrants come from other areas and settle here in large numbers.

The Chief Commissioner can only accept these remarks with a qualification. He welcomes the extension of this cultivation, but the amount, after all, is not very great, and in the whole of the Darrang district is only 22,436 acres, while the waste land available for cultivation in that district is nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres.

77. The following statement gives details of time-expired garden coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in the several districts in the province:

Time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.

District.	Number of time-expired coolies treated in dispensaries.	Nature of disease.							Number of days treated.	Average period of detention, in days.
		Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Anæmia and debility, ætiology unknown.	Other causes.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11*
Cachar	164	...	7	18	24	...	115	164	4,178	25·4
Sylhet	1,0	...	12	14	45	19	80	170	1,580	9·29
Kamrup	17	...	4	5	8	...	...	17	357	21·0
Darrang	106	...	22	19	100	24	31	196	1,319	6·7
Nowgong	59	...	2	4	26	12	15	59	2,372	40·2
Sibsagar	203	...	18	40	24	20	101	203	3,581	17·6
Lakhimpur	206	1	24	34	36	76	93	266	7,435	27·9
Total of 1899	1,075	1	89	134	263	153	435	1,075	20,822	19·3
,, ,, 1898	1,389	5	101	216	309	214	544	1,389	26,535	19·1

The chief variations are those in Darrang and Lakhimpur. No explanation is offered of the large increase in Darrang, principally in fever cases, which rose from 19 in 1898 to 100 in 1899. In Lakhimpur the large decrease was attributed to the general healthiness of the year.

78. As in the previous year, 4 shelters for sick and destitute coolies were attached to dispensaries in Cachar and 8 in Sylhet, and 3 shelters for able-bodied vagrants were kept up in the Habiganj subdivision of the Sylhet district. Of 335 coolies treated in these shelters (including those remaining from the previous year), 276 were *ex*-tea-garden coolies, 21 railway coolies, and 14 other vagrants. Of these, 69 died, 141 were discharged recovered, 103 left before recovery, and 22 remained in the shelters at the close of the year. The rate of mortality was 20·6 per cent., coolies being generally in an advanced state of weakness before they took advantage of the shelters. No coolies were returned to their gardens or repatriated from the shelters during the year. The average stay of the coolies at the Silchar and Katigora shelters was three days. At the other two shelters in Cachar, the average was at Hailakandi 14 days and at Lakhipur 15 days. These high averages were due to the detention of a blind man and an old woman, who could not otherwise be provided for. The average periods of detention in the Sylhet hospital-sheds varied from 28 to 42 days, and no explanation has been offered of this very high average. The total expenditure incurred in connection with the shelters during the year was Rs. 1,721-1-7, distributed as follows:

Sick and destitute coolies.

	Cachar.	Sylhet.	Total.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Buildings and repairs	164 8 0	194 12 3	359 4 3
Diet	883 14 1	376 10 0	1,260 8 1
Cost of clothing	32 1 0	...	32 1 0
Repatriation	...	...	...
Funeral charges	26 0 0	...	26 0 0
Miscellaneous	23 15 3	19 5 0	43 4 3
Total	1,130 6 4	590 11 3	1,721 1 7

The average expenditure on each pauper in dispensary shelters was Rs. 5-3-11. The average in Cachar was Rs. 6-5-7 and in Sylhet Rs. 3-15. The average cost per diem for diet was 1 anna 1 pie in Sylhet, and varied in Cachar from 1 anna 8 pies. in Silchar to 2 annas 7 pies in Lakhipur.

79. The statement below shows the receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1899-1900:

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

Receipts.				Expenditure.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Medical.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Salaries of depôt establishment (including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, compounders, dressers, clerks and menials, etc.) ...	Rs. a. p. 18,249 4 10	Rs. a. p. 2,639 5 3	Rs. a. p. 14,938 10 1
Contractors' license fees under section 13	1,475 10 0	200 0 0	1,675 10 0	Supplies and services (including diet of patients, value of medical stores, clothing and bedding, purchase of country medicines, expenses during the prevalence of epidemics, and petty construction and repairs)			
Recruiters' license fees under section 24	.....	272 0 0	272 0 0	Contingent charges ...	15,685 13 6	2,759 10 3	17,445 7 9 .....
Registration fees under sections 35 and 68	.....	15,596 8 0	15,596 8 0	Grants to dispensaries ...	5,060 0 0	.....	5,060 0 0
Rates under section 109 ...	64,898 7 6	.....	64,898 7 6	Inspectors, Embarkation Agent, and other officers ...	8,838 1 1	19,594 6 7	28,432 7 8
Fees for use of debarkation depots...	3,661 8 3	.....	3,661 8 3	Clerks and servants ...	9,883 13 1	5,617 10 8	15,501 9 10
Fees for labour under sections 112 and 118	6,328 0 0	.....	6,328 0 0	Travelling allowance, etc. ...	8,373 11 0	1,128 2 0	9,501 13 0
Medical examination fees ...	340 5 0	.....	340 5 0	Miscellaneous (including rents, percentages on treasury and audit establishment, refunds, etc.)	5,517 2 0	3,733 13 10	9,250 15 10
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	1,281 13 11	.....	1,281 13 11	Fees of inspecting tea gardens	5,060 10 0	.....	5,060 10 0
Fines and miscellaneous ...	889 14 9	.....	889 14 9	House-rent allowance ...	408 9 1	.....	408 9 1
Diet, etc., charges recovered ...	2,479 9 6	.....	2,479 9 6	Advances	59 0 0	.....	59 0 0
Fees for license of immigrant vessels under section 90 ...	.....	1,300 0 6	1,300 0 6	Deficiency (excess of payments over receipts of Inland Labour Transport Fund) ...	15,174 15 3	—15,174 15 3	.....
Capitation fees	.....	1,955 8 6	1,955 8 6				
Miscellaneous	.....	74 7 6	74 7 6				
Advances	586 8 6	.....	586 8 6				
Total	81,132 13 3	19,398 1 6	1,00,530 14 11	Total	80,374 15 3	19,398 1 6	1,05,629 12 3
Opening balance	1,09,100 11 8	.....	1,09,100 11 8	Closing balance ...	1,01,348 14 4	.....	1,01,348 14 4
Grand total	1,91,233 9 1	19,398 1 6	2,10,631 10 7	Grand total	1,91,723 9 1	19,398 1 6	2,10,631 10 7

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

Shillong,

The 22nd August 1900.

L. J. KERSHAW,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

STATEMENT.

Return showing Statistics of the Labour Force of the Tea Gardens

Class of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of the year.	Additions: Imported. By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contracts under section 111.	Number giving contracts under section 112.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	3,849	84	257	...	24	12
Non-Act labourers adults ...	75,173	...	...	1,801	...	...
children ...	46,848	...	...	400	...	...
Total	125,870	84	257	2,201	24	12
Sylhet ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	11,179	242	171	...	2,708	510
Not-Act labourers adults ...	73,589	...	...	3,490	...	...
children ...	57,863	...	...	1,014	...	...
Total	142,631	242	171	4,504	2,708	510
Surma Valley ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	15,028	326	428	...	2,732	522
Not-Act labourers adults ...	145,762	...	...	5,291	...	...
children ...	104,711	...	...	1,414	...	...
Total	268,501	326	428	6,705	2,732	522
Kamrup ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	613	22	67	...	...	...
Not-Act labourers adults ...	1,042	...	...	63	...	...
children ...	1,196	...	...	24	...	...
Total	2,751	22	67	87	...	...
Darrang ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	25,654	2,765	1,787	...	2,753	1,775
Not-Act labourers adults ...	19,502	...	...	322	...	...
children ...	24,291	...	...	991	...	...
Total	69,447	2,765	1,787	1,313	2,753	1,775
Nowgong ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	7,179	125	727	...	661	209
Not-Act labourers adults ...	6,473	...	...	180	...	...
children ...	6,451	...	...	479	...	...
Total	20,103	125	727	659	661	209
Sibsagar ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	43,805	2,511	2,688	...	2,430	6,808
Not-Act labourers adults ...	43,301	...	...	543	...	...
children ...	58,353	...	...	1,639	...	...
Total	145,459	2,511	2,688	2,182	2,430	6,808
Lakhimpur ... ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	45,731	5,316	1,874	...	2,921	6,813
Non-Act labourers adults ...	38,094	...	...	837	...	...
children ...	43,436	...	...	1,489	...	...
Total	127,258	5,316	1,874	2,326	2,921	6,813
Brahmaputra Valley ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	122,982	10,739	7,143	...	8,765	15,605
Non-Act labourers adults ...	109,309	...	...	2,045	...	...
children ...	133,727	...	...	4,522	...	...
Total	366,018	10,739	7,143	6,567	8,765	15,605
Total for the Province ... Act-I labourers (adults) ...	138,010	11,065	7,571	...	11,492	16,127
Non-Act labourers adults ...	258,071	...	...	7,236	...	...
children ...	238,438	...	...	6,036	...	...
Grand total	634,519	11,065	7,571	13,272	11,492	16,127

n the Province of Assam during the year 1899.

made during the year 1899.								Deductions made during the year 1899.			
Otherwise than by importations.										Deaths.	
Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contracts.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.	Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	First half-year.	Second half-year.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
40	35	...	...	...	...	452	4,301	33	...	41	38
670	...	1,498	1,907	...	1,189	7,065	82,238	225	2,767	899	934
209	...	...	381	3,311	...	4,301	51,149	124	676	320	381
919	35	1,498	2,288	3,311	1,189	11,818	137,688	382	3,443	1,260	1,373
143	31	...	...	...	...	3,805	14,984	208	...	166	115
1,186	...	5,298	3,781	...	1,207	14,962	88,551	443	4,169	979	1,007
398	...	2	1,122	3,850	...	6,386	64,249	235	1,666	383	490
1,727	31	5,300	4,903	3,850	1,207	25,153	167,784	911	5,835	1,528	1,612
183	66	...	...	...	...	4,257	19,285	241	...	207	173
1,856	...	6,796	5,688	...	2,396	22,027	170,789	673	6,936	1,878	1,941
607	...	2	1,503	7,161	...	10,687	115,398	379	2,342	703	871
2,646	66	6,798	7,191	7,161	2,396	36,971	305,472	1,293	9,278	2,788	2,985
1	8	...	...	...	...	98	721	1	...	26	22
118	...	63	399	...	41	684	2,626	6	391	44	31
40	...	...	87	123	...	274	1,470	4	121	22	32
159	8	63	486	123	41	1,056	4,807	11	512	92	85
385	30	...	...	...	...	9,495	35,149	385	...	351	671
135	...	6,485	6,446	...	422	13,810	33,312	135	5,700	329	285
103	...	...	250	1,549	...	2,893	27,184	103	715	261	322
623	30	6,485	6,696	1,549	422	26,198	95,645	623	6,415	1,141	1,278
190	13	...	...	...	...	1,925	9,104	189	...	196	212
120	...	1,059	1,588	...	54	3,001	9,474	126	2,103	137	117
43	...	...	39	395	...	956	7,407	37	501	99	103
353	13	1,059	1,627	395	54	5,882	25,985	352	2,604	432	432
476	310	...	...	...	...	15,223	59,028	476	...	716	1,004
840	...	9,662	4,819	...	1,539	17,403	60,704	838	6,216	570	688
476	...	...	445	3,993	...	6,553	64,906	475	2,632	472	715
1,792	310	9,662	5,264	3,993	1,539	39,179	184,638	1,789	8,848	1,758	2,407
285	196	...	...	...	...	17,405	63,136	359	...	849	1,185
524	...	11,595	2,956	...	1,371	17,283	55,374	443	5,283	442	553
232	...	...	466	3,636	...	5,823	49,259	181	2,000	495	688
1,041	196	11,595	3,422	3,636	1,371	40,511	167,769	983	7,283	1,786	2,426
1,337	557	...	...	...	...	44,146	167,128	1,410	...	2,338	3,094
1,737	...	28,864	16,208	...	3,427	52,181	161,490	1,548	19,693	1,522	1,674
894	...	...	1,287	9,696	...	16,499	150,226	800	5,969	1,349	1,860
3,968	557	28,864	17,495	9,696	3,427	112,826	478,844	3,758	25,662	5,129	6,628
1,520	623	...	...	...	...	48,403	186,413	1,651	...	2,545	3,267
3,393	...	35,662	21,896	...	5,823	74,208	332,279	2,221	26,629	3,600	3,613
1,501	...	2	2,790	16,857	...	27,186	265,624	1,179	8,311	2,052	2,731
6,614	623	35,662	24,686	16,857	5,823	149,797	784,316	5,051	34,940	7,997	9,613

Return showing Statistics of the Labour Force of the Tea Gardens

Class of labourers.	Deductions made during: Desertions. First half-year.	Desertions. Second half-year.	By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under section 111.	Number giving agreements under section 112.	Cancelment under section 11A.	Cancelment under section 111A, 111B, 129, 140, 140A, or 177.
	19		20	21	22	23	24
Cachar ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	153 / 1,149 / 450	185 / 1,142 / 322	... / ... / 1,189	... / 19 / ...	... / 11 / ...	8 / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	1,752	1,649	1,189	19	11	8	...
Sylhet ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	187 / 1,784 / 612	140 / 2,189 / 978	... / ... / 1,207	... / 2,036 / ...	... / 464 / ...	... / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	2,583	3,307	1,207	2,036	464	...	...
Surma Valley ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	340 / 2,933 / 1,062	325 / 3,331 / 1,300	... / ... / 2,396	... / 2,055 / ...	... / 475 / ...	8 / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	4,335	4,956	2,396	2,055	475	8	...
Kamrup .. ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	26 / 103 / 41	6 / 193 / 119	... / ... / 41	... / ... / ...	... / ... / ...	... / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	170	318	41	...	...	...	...
Darrang ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	385 / 568 / 252	409 / 481 / 99	... / ... / 422	... / 2,207 / ...	... / 1,140 / ...	16 / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	1,205	989	422	2,207	1,140	16	...
Nowgong ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	94 / 108 / 80	138 / 193 / 33	... / ... / 54	... / 268 / ...	... / 99 / ...	... / ... / ...	... / ... / ...
Total	282	364	54	268	99	...	...
Sibsagar ... ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	524 / 687 / 436	520 / 519 / 385	... / ... / 1,539	... / 1,940 / ...	... / 5,462 / ...	14 / ... / ...	2 / .. / ..
Total	1,647	1,424	1,539	1,940	5,462	14	2
Lakhimpur ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	578 / 630 / 236	665 / 1,051 / 710	... / ... / 1,371	... / 2,512 / ...	... / 5,923 / ...	29 / ... / ...	... / .. / ..
Total	1,444	2,426	1,371	2,512	5,923	29	..
Brahmaputra Valley ... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults ... / children ...	1,607 / 2,006 / 1,045	1,738 / 2,437 / 1,346	... / ... / 3,427	... / 6,927 / ...	... / 12,624 / ...	59 / .. / ..	2 / .. / ..
Total	4,748	5,521	3,427	6,927	12,624	59	2
Total for the Province... { Act-I labourers (adults) ... / Non-Act labourers { adults .. / children ...	1,947 / 5,029 / 2,107	2,061 / 5,768 / 2,646	... / ... / 5,823	... / 8,982 / ...	... / 13,099 / ...	67 / ... / ...	2 / ... / ...
Grand total	9,083	10,477	5,823	8,982	13,099	67	2

in the Province of Assam during the year 1899—continued.

the year 1899—*contd.*									Annual strength.		
Cancelment for permanent unfitness under section 122.	Cancelment under section 129.	Suspended under section 130.	Effluxion of time, section 141.	Redemption, section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1899.	Strength on 1st July 1899.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Deathrate per mille.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		35
...	...	...	1,206	...	...	1,684	3,617	3,173	3,511	2,894	31·6
...	...	...	...	...	...	7,118	75,002	75,147	75,160	75,119	24·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,492	47,627	46,902	46,873	47,294	14·8
...	...	...	1,206	...	..	12,292	125,396	125,222	125,526	125,309	20·9
4	...	...	5,903	...	10	6,733	8,251	9,318	10,248	8,784	20·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	13,076	75,473	75,848	74,718	75,661	20·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,591	58,638	58,628	58,245	58,643	14·9
4	...	...	5,903	...	10	25,400	142,384	143,794	143,212	143,089	21·9
4	...	...	7,109	...	10	8,417	10,868	13,491	13,759	13,678	20·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	20,222	150,567	150,905	149,878	150,730	25·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	9,053	106,345	105,530	105,120	105,937	14·9
4	...	...	7,109	...	10	37,692	267,780	269,926	268,758	268,398	21·5
2	...	...	69	...	74	226	485	581	597	533	84·8
...	...	...	...	...	...	768	1,898	2,242	2,092	2,050	36·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	380	1,090	1,259	1,227	1,174	45·1
2	...	...	69	...	74	1,374	3,433	4,082	3,916	3,757	46·1
16	...	...	7,534	4	449	10,420	24,739	24,533	25,093	24,631	49·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	10,845	27,467	23,788	23,645	23,127	27·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	2,174	25,019	24,754	24,522	24,882	23·6
16	...	...	7,534	4	449	23,439	72,206	73,075	73,261	72,640	33·6
73	...	...	1,581	...	1	2,484	6,620	6,799	6,989	6,709	59·6
...	...	...	...	...	...	3,151	6,323	7,572	7,022	6,947	30·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	907	6,300	6,362	6,406	6,434	31·4
73	...	...	1,581	...	1	6,542	19,443	20,733	20,418	20,088	42·6
55	...	...	11,392	...	912	15,615	43,413	41,698	42,751	42,535	40·2
...	...	...	...	...	...	16,920	41,764	47,750	45,585	45,707	27·5
...	...	...	...	...	...	6,654	58,252	58,435	58,394	58,343	20·2
55	...	...	11,392	...	912	39,189	145,449	147,883	146,671	146,666	28·4
239	...	...	12,745	6	699	17,354	45,782	45,917	45,824	45,749	44·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	16,837	36,537	40,085	39,090	39,313	25·1
...	...	...	...	...	...	5,681	45,578	44,163	43,799	43,870	26·9
239	...	...	12,745	6	699	39,872	127,897	130,168	128,713	129,032	32·6
385	...	...	33,321	10	2,135	46,099	121,029	119,526	121,254	120,277	36·7
...	...	...	...	...	...	48,521	112,169	121,440	115,374	117,204	27·4
...	...	...	...	...	...	15,796	134,130	131,973	134,148	134,700	23·8
385	...	...	33,321	10	2,135	110,416	368,472	372,941	370,979	372,184	31·8
389	...	...	40,430	10	2,145	54,516	131,897	132,019	135,014	131,958	43·6
...	...	...	...	...	...	67,743	263,536	272,415	265,733	267,968	26·3
...	...	...	...	...	...	24,849	240,775	240,503	239,470	240,039	19·9
389	...	...	40,430	10	2,145	148,108	636,208	644,937	639,738	640,580	27·5

SHILLONG : Printed and published by CONYNGHAM FRANCIS, Press Superintendent, Assam, at the Secretariat Printing Office : (Rev.) No. 159 —300—27-8-1900.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1900.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
1901.

[*Price* 1s. 4d. [*Price One Rupee.*

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SHILLONG:

PRINTED BY CONYNGHAM FRANCIS, PRESS SUPERINTENDENT, ASSAM.

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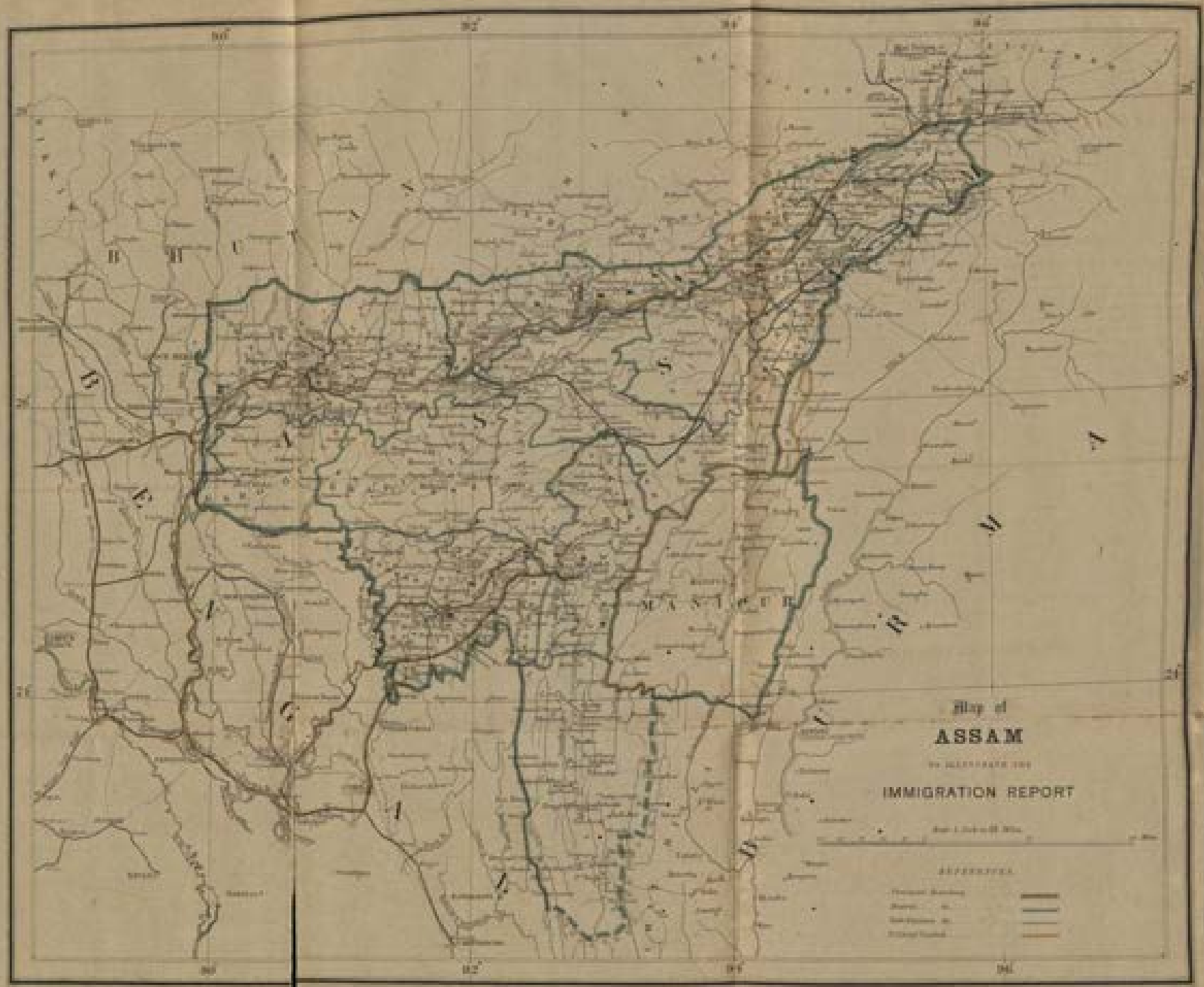
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IMMIGRATION REPORT

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR 1900.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

THE present report deals only with labour imported for employment on tea gardens in the province, in the oil refinery at Margherita, in coal mines, and in a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. It does not deal with labourers who migrate annually to the province during the cold weather in search of employment on the Assam-Bengal Railway or under the Public Works Department, who generally return to their homes in April and May. Act I of 1882 was in force during 1900, and the provisions of that Act will therefore be referred to in the report. The new Assam Labour and Emigration Act, VI of 1901, came into force on the 9th March 1901.

Statistics of labour force.

2. General statistics of the labour force, showing the additions to, and deductions from, the labour force of the province during 1900 are given in Statement I.

The number of additions to the labour force in 1900 was much larger than in 1899, while the deductions also show an increase, the net result being an addition of 26,263, or 3·9 per cent. to the total labour force at the close of the year. The total labour force increased in all districts of the province, except Kamrup. The scarcity prevailing in the recruiting districts, and the consequent cheapness of the supply, facilitated the course of coolie immigration. In Nowgong, there was a slight increase in the number of children and non-Act adults, but the number of Act adults declined. Cachar, Sylhet, and Sibsagar show a decrease in the number of Act labourers. In Sibsagar, the decrease was due to the disuse of Act I in renewing agreements locally and to the substitution of agreements under Act XIII in their place.

The gradual growth of the labour force is shown in the marginal figures, which give the mean annual strength for the last six years. Mean annual strength throughout this report is calculated on the mean strength of the two half-years.

1895	... 526,833	1898	... 642,283
1896	... 571,411	1899	... 640,160
1897	... 630,107	1900	... 664,897

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

3. The nationality and sex of the adult labour force are shown in Statement II. Compared with 1899, the variations in the percentages of the total labour force under each of the several nationalities are very slight. Labourers from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas still form the bulk of the labour force.

The adult labour force is almost equally divided as regards sex, the percentage of female population to the total number of adults being 50·13. Amongst Act labourers men preponderate, while in the non-Act population the number of women slightly exceeds that of men. Children form 37·55 per cent. of the total labour force.

Distribution of the labour force.

4. Of the total labour force of the province, 41·55 per cent. is employed in the Surma Valley and 58·45 per cent. in the Assam Valley. The Act population, which forms 20·06 per cent. of the total labour force, is almost entirely employed in the Assam Valley, Act labourers in the Surma Valley amounting to only 6·04 per cent. of the total Act force.

Labour force and acreage under tea.

5. The total area under tea has more than doubled itself during the past twenty years, while the adult labour force is now more than treble its numbers in 1880. The number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea under cultivation has risen from 80 in 1880 to 123 in 1900. It reached its highest point, 129, in 1897, a year when the number of immigrants also attained its maximum, and fell again to 121 in 1899, in which year the number of immigrants was exceptionally small.

Excluding 1897, the average number of labourers per 100 acres has been fairly steady since 1895. The average in the Assam Valley was slightly in excess of that in the Surma Valley previous to 1898, when the average was the same in both valleys (124). In 1899 and 1900, the Surma Valley average was slightly in excess of that in the Assam Valley.

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

6. The following statement gives particulars of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past five years :

Provincial figures of immigration.

Class of labourers.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act { Sardari adults	10,460	22,490	12,080	7,571	16,728
Act { Contractors' adults ...	18,870	18,127	10,559	11,065	13,241
Non-Act adults	31,971	25,711	12,877	7,236	15,075
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	61,301	66,328	35,516	25,872	45,044
Children	19,814	29,603	13,653	6,036	17,689
Grand total	81,115	95,931	49,169	31,908	62,733

This statement is of interest as indicating the influence of famine in the recruiting districts to promote emigration and especially sardari emigration. The years 1896, 1897, as well as 1900, were famine years. The number of importations in 1900 is less than in other famine years, but there was a marked increase compared with the non-famine years of 1898 and 1899. On the appearance of famine towards the close of 1899, a large number of sardars were sent down to recruit, and their operations proved comparatively successful. The large number of children accompanying the immigrants is a satisfactory feature, as it points to family emigration. Immigrants brought by sardars or coming of their own accord generally come in families, while contractors, as a rule, send up adults only.

All districts in the province show an increase in the recruitment of both Act and non-Act adults and children, the increase being most marked in Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur. In Lakhimpur, where the demand is always greater than the supply, 18,395 immigrants were imported during 1900, against 9,516 in the previous year. There was an increase in the number both of sardari and of contractors' adults in all districts except Sibsagar, where the number of contractors' adults fell from 2,511 in 1899 to 1,660 in 1900. Of the total number of adult immigrants into the province, 29·07 per cent. only were imported into the Surma Valley. In this valley Act I has been falling more and more into disuse, and coolies under Act I imported in 1900 formed but 4·8 per cent. of the number imported into the province under the Act.

7. The nationality and sex of adult immigrants and the agency by which Act immigrants were imported are given in Statement III. The noticeable feature in this statement is the marked increase in the number of immigrants from the Central Provinces, evidently due to the famine. The total is 16,962 in 1900 against 7,197 in 1899. A large increase, from 11,192 to 17,605, is also shown in the number of coolies imported from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. Considering that the year was favourable to family emigration, an increase in the percentage of adult female immigrants might have been expected. The percentage, however, shows little change, being 47·57, against 47·2 in 1899.

Nationality and sex of adult immigrants, and agency by which recruited.

8. Statement IV shows for each division and district the extent to which Act labourers were recruited by garden sardars and by contractors respectively, and the average number imported by each sardar. It also shows the number of certificates issued to sardars providing for the medical examination of labourers prior to engagement under section 70 of Act I of 1882. Figures are also given, showing separately the number of coolies who contracted in the recruiting districts under Chapters III and IV of the Act, and of those who contracted at Dhubri. The average number of recruits per sardar was 3·9, against 1·4 in 1899 and 2·7 in 1898. In 1897, which was also a famine year, the average number was 5·1. The number of certificates granted to sardars in 1900 was much less than in 1899, the figures having fallen from 5,411 to 4,243. A large number of sardars were sent down in November and December 1899, when scarcity first appeared in the recruiting districts and sardari recruiting prospects seemed bright; and the coolies recruited by these sardars, who were imported in February

Recruitment of Act labourers by sardars and contractors.

and March 1900, are shown in column 4 of the statement. The figure in column 5 is thus somewhat misleading, being calculated only on the number of certificates granted during 1900. The small number of certificates granted in 1900 points to a decrease in the number of immigrants during 1901.

The percentage of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers shows little variation from the previous year. There was a considerable decrease in Sylhet, almost wholly in the South Sylhet subdivision of this district. The Subdivisional Officer attributes this to the belief of the planters that the medical examination is not thorough. On the other hand, in Darrang, the importance of this safeguard against the importation of unsuitable labour is being more appreciated. Of 28,514 contracts to labour in the Assam Valley districts only 6,704 were executed at Dhubri. There was a steady decline in the proportion of contracts so executed in 1896, 1897, and 1898, with a slight recovery in 1899. In 1900 the proportion of Dhubri contracts again decreased, and was lower than that of 1898. Under the operation of the new law, contracting at Dhubri has ceased with effect from the 1st April 1901.

Cost of importation.

9. No accurate information is available on this subject, but, so far as the Chief Commissioner has been able to ascertain, the average cost of importation may be said to have been roughly Rs. 75 for a sardari coolie and Rs. 100 for a contractor's coolie. The rate was certainly less than in the two preceding years, for the year 1900 was an exceptionally favourable one for emigration. The total number of adult immigrants being 45,044, it may be assumed that the total cost of importation to the tea industry was not less than thirty-five lakhs of rupees; whereas if tea coolies had come to Assam of their own volition as they do for labour on the Railway or in the Public Works Department, and to work on tea gardens in the Duars and in Ceylon, the actual cost of their transit would not have exceeded four or five lakhs of rupees. The difference, or about thirty lakhs, is the cost which the tea industry incurred last year in procuring coolies. So far as the industry is concerned, whether from the point of view of capital or labour, this money is wasted, and it is at present a part of the annual price which the industry is content to pay to middlemen in preference to raising the wages of coolies to a fair market rate.

Transit of immigrants to the Brahmaputra Valley.

10. The number of immigrants and their dependents who arrived at the Dhubri depôts on their way to the various districts of the Brahmaputra Valley was 10,021, against 7,135 in the previous year. Of these, only 6,601 were medically examined by the Civil Surgeon, with a view to placing them under contract, of whom 161, or 2·4 per cent., were rejected. Of those rejected, 84 were sent up to the gardens as dependents, 23 as free labourers, and 54 were repatriated. The two depôts at Dhubri were satisfactorily managed during the year.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

11. The number of deaths which occurred among all classes of immigrants during transit between the port of embarkation and their destination in the Assam Valley is given below:

	Number of deaths		
	From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
1	2	3	4
On board the streamer. Between Goalundo and Dhubri ...	76	5	81
On board the streamer. Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh (a) Goalundo coolies	87	19	106
On board the streamer. Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh (b) Dhubri ,,	14	2	16
At Dhubri	147	11	158
,, Gauhati	1	...	1
,, Tezpur	76	1	77
,, Rangamatighat	3	1	4
,, Silghat	7	1	8
,, Nigriting	12	1	13
,, Kokilamukh	45	3	48
,, Desangmukh	17	3	20
,, Kamalabari	...	...	...
,, Dibrugarh	43	19	62
Total of 1900	528	66	594
,, ,, 1899	72	18	90
,, ,, 1898	84	49	133

Even allowing for the increased volume of immigration, the mortality was much heavier than in the two previous years. This is primarily due to the effects of scarcity among immigrants, many of whom were predisposed to disease. There was serious mortality from cholera on the railway route, and many coolies, when they were sent on board the steamers, had the germs of disease already developed in them. Notwithstanding the precautions taken by the Bengal Government, it seems impossible to prevent this.

Cholera was prevalent on the mail steamers, both below and above Dhubri, in the early part of the year. The number of deaths on the steamers from cholera was 177, exclusive of deaths among coolies landed sick at Dhubri. Coolies forwarded from Dhubri suffered less than those travelling direct to stations above Dhubri, there being only 14 cholera deaths among the former, as compared with 87 among the latter, although in proportion to numbers a larger number of deaths would have been expected. Deaths from other causes increased but slightly.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley.

12. The Assam-Bengal Railway has for the first time been largely used to convey coolies to the gardens in Cachar. In 1899, out of a total of 2,542 coolies imported into this district, only 272 were brought by railway. In 1900, 3,685 coolies were imported by railway and 3,225 by steamer. In Sylhet conveyance by railway is also on the increase. Accurate statistics are not available, but of 11,289 immigrants to the district, 4,803 passed through the river depôts, and it is probable that nearly all others were imported by railway. All the gardens in Habiganj, and a considerable number in South Sylhet, now import their coolies by railway.

The mortality among coolies in transit shows a considerable increase, there having been 26 deaths *en route* and 42 deaths at the river depôts, against 0 and 5, respectively, in 1899. It is satisfactory to find that no deaths occurred in any of the railway depôts during 1900, but it is not known whether any occurred in the railway *en route*.

Debarkation depôts.

13. The extent to which debarkation depôts were used during the year is shown in Statement V. The depôt at Rangamati in the Darrang district was re-opened, and those at Inaihganj and Madna in Sylhet were closed during the year. The proportion of coolies who passed through the depôts in 1900 was 98·8 per cent. of the total number of immigrants, against 95·0 per cent. in 1899. The number of detentions for want of a guide was very large, especially at the depôts in Darrang and Lakhimpur. In Sibsagar, there was an improvement in this respect.

Anti-cholera inoculation.

14. Five thousand two hundred and four coolies who had been inoculated against cholera in the recruiting districts were imported in 1900, against 2,246 in 1899. Of these, 15 died between the recruiting district and port of embarkation, 29 between the port of embarkation and garden, and 18 after arrival on the garden. The percentage of deaths from cholera *en route* (between the port of embarkation and the garden) among coolies in general, was 1·18, as compared with ·294 in the previous year. The percentage of deaths of coolies inoculated against cholera was ·845, while that of uninoculated coolies was 1·23. The advantage in favour of inoculated coolies, though apparent, is small and less than was to have been expected.

The optional return giving details of deaths on the garden during cholera epidemics is unfortunately of little value, as it was furnished by only five tea gardens. The result is summarised in the table below and shows no deaths among the small number of inoculated coolies :

Number in affected groups.		Number of cases.		Number of deaths.	
Uninoculated.	Inoculated.	Uninoculated.	Inoculated.	Uninoculated.	Inoculated.
3,184	12	118	...	83	...

Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

15. Statement VI gives particulars relating to cases of fraudulent and irregular recruitment. As in previous years, all such cases were carefully enquired into. Though the number of immigrants rose from 31,908 in 1899 to 62,733 in 1900, the number of complaints of fraud or irregularity in recruitment fell from 216 to 124. The reason for this improvement is to be found in the facilities which existed for legitimate recruiting owing to the famine, and the consequent diminution of temptation to have recourse to malpractices,

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

16. The number of contracts made in 1900, as compared with the preceding year, is shown below:

Number of contracts made.

	1899.	1900.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4
In the actual labour districts under section 111 of the Act ..	11,497	8,223	— 28·47
Ditto ditto ditto 112 ditto ...	16,127	15,738	— 2·41
At Dhubri under section 112A of the Act	5,566	6,432	+ 15·55
In the recruiting districts	13,071	23,265	+ 77·98
Contracts executed under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code	1,683	2,364	+ 40·46
Total	47,944	56,022	+ 16·84

The general decrease in the number of contracts executed in the labour districts under Act I of 1882 is due to the increased use of Act XIII of 1859. The depression in the tea industry, which has brought about retrenchment of expenditure in every possible direction, has led to greater recourse being had to Act XIII, as a saving is thereby effected in capitation fees, in stamps on contracts and in other directions.

With the exception of the Lakhimpur district, there was a general decrease in the number of contracts executed under section 111 of the Act. Lakhimpur shows an increase of 22·86 per cent. in the number of contracts executed under section 111 and a decrease of 6·66 per cent. in the number executed under section 112. The Deputy Commissioner remarks—

> The increase under section 111 and the decrease under section 112 admit of a possible explanation. As stated in former years, very few coolies are sent into Dibrugarh to execute contracts before a Magistrate. The visit of an Inspector to a garden is utilised to have contracts executed under section 112. When contracts expire, and there is not likely to be a visit, they are often renewed for one year under section 111. The manager prefers the longer term, and so does any coolie who is in want of ready cash. Renewing his agreement means a sum down, which depends on the term for which he renews it.

On the other hand, there was a slight increase in the number of contracts executed under section 112 in Sylhet, Darrang, and Nowgong.

Lakhimpur, again, shows the highest number of coolies contracted under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code, 1,191 having been imported into this district out of a total of 2,364 into the province.

17. The total number of contracts executed under section 111 which required verification by an Inspector, and the total number of contracts verified, are given in the margin. These results are not satisfactory. The number of contracts left unverified is very large, and the percentage (74·05) of contracts verified on the total number of contracts is the lowest since 1895. There has been a considerable improvement in Lakhimpur district, but Darrang again shows a low percentage. The explanation given by the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang is that the contracts left unverified were, for the most part, executed after the date on which the garden was inspected. This explanation, no doubt, applies to other districts also, and the only remedy is for inspecting officers to pay special visits towards the close of the year to those gardens where the register of contracts under section 111 shows that a considerable number of contracts remain unverified.

Verification of contracts.

District.	Total for verification.	Total verified.
Cachar ...	18	18
Sylhet ...	288	230
Kamrup ...	...	...
Darrang ...	2,831	1,959
Nowgong ...	548	443
Sibsagar ...	2,552	1,807
Lakhimpur ...	4,259	3,316
Total ...	10,496	7,773

18. Details regarding expiry and cancelment of contracts are given in Statement I. The Chief Commissioner is glad to notice a considerable improvement in reporting the determination of contracts in the province generally, and especially in Darrang. The

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

number of contracts cancelled under section 11A rose from 69 to 93, of which 26 were contracts of women who had come to the province unaccompanied by husband or guardian. Of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled, 87 were repatriated, 77 at the cost of the employers concerned.

Four hundred and four contracts were cancelled under section 122 of the Act, on account of permanent incapacity to labour, against 389 in 1899. Of the contracts cancelled on this ground, 339 were those of contractors' coolies and 64 only of sardari coolies. These figures illustrate the advantages of sardari recruitment. The contracts of 94 newly-imported coolies were cancelled under section 122. One contract was cancelled in Darrang, under section 140 of the Act, on account of the grave misconduct of an employer.

19. One hundred and forty-three contracts were made void under section 129 in consequence of the estates on which the labourers concerned were employed having been declared unfit for the residence of labourers. Three gardens were closed to Act labour during the year, and the contracts of Act labourers on two of these were cancelled. On the third, through an oversight, the orders for the cancellation of the contracts of Act labourers were not given effect to during the year, but the contracts have since been cancelled.

20. Twenty-four contracts were redeemed—13 in Darrang, 9 in Lakhimpur, and 2 in Sibsagar. In 1899, ten contracts were redeemed and in 1898 eight.

21. The number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent during 1900 was 2,533, against 2,145 in 1899. There is a considerable increase in the number of contracts so cancelled in Sibsagar, 1,599, against 912 in 1899; of these, 1,595 were cancelled with a view to renewal. Of 578 contracts determined in this manner in Lakhimpur, 522 were cancelled with a view to renewal, and in 46 cases the coolies were repatriated, being unfit for labour.

The system of cancelling contracts by mutual consent with a view to renewal under Act XIII of 1859 has recently been under the consideration of the Chief Commissioner. A practice has grown up on certain gardens of cancelling contracts for four years under Act I of 1882 by mutual consent, at the end of the third year, with a view to substituting renewed contracts under Act XIII, this method having been adopted by employers in order to keep the rate of wages uniform. Under his original contract, the labourer is entitled to an increased monthly wage in his fourth year. On cancellation of this agreement by mutual consent, the coolie is placed under agreement under Act XIII on the same rate of pay as he has previously been earning—Rs. 5 per month—a bonus being given to induce him to take an agreement under that Act. In many cases, but not in all, the bonus given compensates the coolie pecuniarily for the loss of increase in monthly pay which he has earned, but it has to be remembered that the provisions which confer advantages on the coolie in respect of rice, sick allowance, etc., are no longer binding on the employer. The coolie loses the higher rate of pay during the last year of his original contract, and although he gets a bonus in its place he would have got a bonus all the same if he had not renewed until the end of his original contract. On the whole, it cannot be to the advantage of a labourer to cancel his contract under such conditions, and, looking to the relations between an employer and his coolies, the Chief Commissioner finds it impossible to resist the impression that the renewal of these contracts under Act XIII is not altogether free from undue influence. It may be true that in most gardens coolies under Act XIII enjoy the same privileges in regard to free quarters and medical attendance as coolies under Act I, but they are not entitled to such privileges, and the Chief Commissioner has never heard of their getting sick allowance or rice at the statutory rate. The question is one which evidently calls for close attention on the part of inspecting officers.

22. The Chief Commissioner is glad to observe that the instructions contained in last year's report regarding the cancellation by mutual consent of the contracts of sickly and unfit labourers have been attended to by inspecting officers. Some cases have been brought to light, where contracts of sickly and unfit labourers were cancelled, evidently for the purpose of keeping down the rate of mortality among Act labourers. A very bad case of "discharge by mutual consent" was reported from Sibsagar, where it was the practice on one garden to expel sickly coolies who had become unfit for labour. Cases of this nature are believed to be rare, but their occurrence makes it all the more necessary for inspecting officers to closely examine all cancellations in the case of sickly labourers.

23. The provisions of section 121 and section 170 of the Act, by which periods of absence through sickness for more than 30 days and of absence from work without reasonable cause are added to the term of contracts, are rarely resorted to by employers, and in only two districts—Sibsagar and Lakhimpur—were they taken advantage of. In Lakhimpur very little use was made of these sections, while in Sibsagar endorsements extending the term of contracts on account of absence from work were made in 214 cases.

Repatriation of labourers.

24. Certain particulars are given in Statement VII regarding the repatriation of labourers on tea gardens whose contracts were cancelled under the provisions of the Act. Nearly one-half the total number, who were given the option of repatriation—a larger proportion than usual—preferred to remain on the garden or in the labour district to being returned to their homes.

Wages.

25. The figures given in the following statement are based on information obtained by officers inspecting gardens, who are required to ascertain the wages paid during the month preceding that in which the inspection is held:

Subdivision.	Act.		Non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr	4 2 8	3 3 10	4 9 4	3 8 1	2 4 0
Hailakandi	4 15 1	3 14 11	5 6 4	3 15 8	2 7 8
North Sylhet	4 12 4	2 12 9	4 14 9	3 2 9	2 3 11
South „	5 0 11	3 11 2	5 0 2	3 9 9	2 0 4
Karimganj	4 7 5	3 5 13	4 5 11	3 5 11	2 8 9
Habiganj	4 10 0	3 12 1	5 8 6	4 3 2	2 10 3
Kamrup	4 11 7	3 9 7	4 9 10	3 10 1	2 5 6
Darrang, sadr	4 11 5	3 5 8	5 4 7	3 6 9	2 1 2
Mangaldai	4 1 11	3 1 5	5 10 2	3 2 7	1 12 4
Nowgong	4 8 3	3 10 7	5 2 10	3 11 9	2 7 1
Sibsagar, sadr	5 2 1	3 13 4	5 8 5	3 13 6	2 6 10
Jorhat	4 13 5	3 9 6	5 5 9	3 6 1	2 3 1
Golaghat	4 9 0	3 8 4	5 2 8	3 7 9	2 7 3
Lakhimpur, sadr	5 3 0	4 0 4	6 5 8	4 10 5	3 1 8
North Lakhimpur	4 1 6	3 5 4	4 3 9	3 3 6	1 15 0
Average	4 10 6	3 8 3	5 2 3	3 9 11	2 5 3

26. The table below shows separately the average wages paid to coolies during the manufacturing and non-manufacturing seasons, respectively :

Subdivision.	Season.	Act.		Non-Act.		
		Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	4 3 0	4 4 0	5 0 1	4 4 0	2 7 11
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 4	3 7 7	4 6 8	3 11 9	2 2 6
Hailakandi ...	Manufacturing ...	5 5 0	4 1 11	5 3 0	4 2 7	2 7 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 9 2	3 12 0	4 15 9	3 12 9	2 8 1
North Sylhet ...	Manufacturing ...	4 12 0	2 14 10	5 3 11	3 4 3	1 12 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 12 7	3 6 5	4 12 10	3 2 3	2 6 10
South Sylhet ...	Manufacturing ...	5 2 0	3 12 5	5 3 2	3 11 11	2 1 10
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 8 9	3 1 7	4 7 6	3 3 7	1 11 10
Karimganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4 7 5	3 5 11	4 13 11	3 13 6	2 7 2
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 3 0	3 4 9	4 1 9	3 0 3	2 10 0
Habiganj ...	Manufacturing ...	4 9 9	3 8 9	5 14 9	4 9 9	2 12 9
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 6 0	3 4 8	5 6 11	4 0 8	2 7 3
Kamrup ...	Manufacturing ...	5 0 11	3 13 1	4 14 6	3 15 3	2 7 4
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 5	3 3 10	4 5 7	3 5 3	2 4 0
Darrang, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	4 14 2	3 14 9	5 14 8	3 10 8	2 6 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 7 5	3 10 2	5 9 7	3 7 1	2 2 0
Mangaldai ...	Manufacturing ...	4 9 5	3 4 6	6 1 11	3 8 10	2 5 9
	Non-manufacturing ..	4 2 3	3 0 5	5 10 7	3 3 7	1 15 1
Nowgong ...	Manufacturing ...	4 10 6	3 13 9	5 6 0	3 14 10	2 8 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 6 1	3 7 6	4 15 9	3 8 9	2 6 0
Sibsagar, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5 4 9	4 1 0	5 13 4	4 2 9	2 8 0
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 15 6	3 9 6	5 3 6	3 8 4	2 5 8
Jorhat ...	Manufacturing ...	4 14 5	3 12 1	5 13 0	3 8 9	2 5 3
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 2 5	3 8 1	4 5 1	3 4 2	2 4 5
Golaghat ...	Manufacturing ...	4 13 6	3 13 3	5 4 4	3 13 0	2 8 7
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 4 7	3 3 5	5 1 0	3 2 7	2 5 11
Lakhimpur, sadr ...	Manufacturing ...	5 5 10	4 4 11	6 10 3	4 12 11	3 2 1
	Non-manufacturing ...	4 14 5	3 15 2	5 14 2	4 4 10	2 10 7
North Lakhimpur ...	Manufacturing ...	5 6 1	4 1 2	5 2 7	3 13 1	2 4 9
	Non-manufacturing ...	3 5 1	2 7 11	3 1 9	2 5 0	1 6 7
	Average	4 10 1	3 9 3	5 2 7	3 10 9	2 5 5

27. The figures in the above statements are reproduced on the same lines as in previous years, but they are deficient, inasmuch as they furnish correct information only in regard to the particular month for which they are prepared, and although upon a general average of gardens and districts a fair result is undoubtedly obtained in this way, it must be admitted that the figures are not more than approximately correct, and that they are compiled upon an inadequate and imperfect basis. The Chief Commissioner has since the close of the year prescribed a monthly statement of wages paid to Act coolies to be furnished by employers, which will render it possible in future reports to give more accurate figures of the average remuneration they receive.

28. The most remarkable feature of the figures for 1900 is that they show a lower rate of wages than the average of any year since 1895. The amount is considerably below the statutory so-called minimum wage, and when the average is below the minimum of five rupees and four rupees, it follows that in the majority of cases the minimum was not earned. Converted to a daily rate, the average wage paid to men has been a little over two annas and nine pies, and the average wage paid to women has been a little over two annas a day. This is a miserable average pittance, and leaves no room for doubt that employers have been endeavouring to effect economy in working at the expense of the labour force. The Chief Commissioner has come across a gross case in which coolies in the fourth year of their agreement were not paid the higher rates of salary to which they were entitled. Cases have frequently come to his notice in which rice has not been provided at the statutory rate, and in which subsistence allowance has not been paid to sick coolies. Such cases show the ease with which employers, when they are so disposed, can set aside the provisions of the law for the protection of labourers. The odious practice of allowing only quarter *haziris*, or a daily wage of three pice in the case of men and less in the case of women, appears to be commoner than Mr. Cotton had imagined.

These figures, and facts, when they are considered in connection with the annual expenditure of some thirty lakhs of rupees in acquiring coolies—an outlay which would have been unnecessary if the wages offered were sufficient to attract labour—leave the Chief Commissioner more and more convinced that the insufficiency of wages is the most serious of the troubles from which the industry in Assam is suffering. He is no longer prepared to advocate half measures, and it is, in his opinion, a serious consideration whether the Legislature ought not now to accept the situation which the Secretary of State has always pointed out would be inevitable when the means of communication were improved and abolish a penal contract altogether, and leave Assam planters to get their labour in the same manner that the Duars and Chittagong and Ceylon planters obtain their supply. The case of Ceylon is particularly in point. The Chief Commissioner finds, from information published by a special correspondent in the *Englishman*, who wrote, after making local enquiries on the island, that labour there is free and unfettered by indenture, or anything in the nature of agreement that either party cannot terminate with a month's notice; that the coolies are imported by sea from the Madras Presidency, and that the average cost of importing labour is only Rs. 10 per head; that men are paid a daily wage of 33 cents, or about $5\frac{1}{2}$ annas, and women 25 cents, or exactly 4 annas; and that they receive, as they do in Assam, free quarters and medical attendance, etc. There is no labour difficulty in Ceylon, because the labourers are paid a fair market wage: but in Assam the difficulty is always present, and Mr. Cotton's recent experience has led him to the conclusion that it will never cease until it is allowed to solve itself, without the assistance of Government, and without any kind of penal legislation, by the ordinary laws of supply and demand.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

29. The birth-rate per mille on tea gardens during the year is shown in column 36 of Statement I. The rate in 1900 calculated on tea-garden population was 27·6, against 26·3 in 1899 and 21·6 in 1898. Calculated on adult female population, it was 89·2, compared with 85·1 in 1899 and 69·9 in 1898. The increase in the registered birth-rate is probably the result of improved registration. The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, remarks as follows on the decrease in his district :

Birth-rate.

> The recorded birth-rate shows a decrease, and yet the point is one that always receives special attention. In most of the gardens which I inspected myself, the registration of births seemed fairly complete. The practice of procuring abortion among coolies is so prevalent, that the ordinary birth-rate cannot be taken as the standard. I am indebted to Mr. Baker (District Superintendent of Police) for one explanation of the practice—the laxity or entire absence of the marriage-tie among coolies. A woman is proud of bearing a son to her lawful husband, but if she is only a man's mistress, she finds a child that no father owns an encumbrance.

The birth-rate among tea-garden coolies is considerably lower than the provincial rate, which was 34·96 per thousand on the total population and 162·4 on the total adult female population.

30. The Chief Commissioner considers that these figures afford evidence of an unsatisfactory feature of tea-garden management. The low rate of fecundity may be partially due, as the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur suggests, to the weakness of the marriage-tie among coolie emigrants. But this is not the principal cause of the low birth-rate, which is due to hard work among anæmic women who are unable to give birth to healthy children. Many infants are still-born or die soon after birth, in which case their birth is not reported. Insufficient consideration is often bestowed on coolie women while pregnant, and the consequence is an excessive number of miscarriages and an abnormally low birth-rate among a class of people who, in their own homes, are as prolific as any in India.

31. Column 35 of Statement I gives details showing the death-rate of the labour force on tea gardens in each district. The death-rate per mille of the whole labour force for the year (29·4) is somewhat higher than that of 1899 (27·5). The year was, on the whole, a healthy one, and the only reason for an increase in mortality is the fact that a large number of weak and sickly immigrants were imported from the famine districts. Having regard to this circumstance, the increase is less than might have been expected. But the truth is that registration is very imperfect, especially among children, and, except for comparative purposes, it is not possible to draw many valuable inferences from these figures. It is observed that there is a decrease in Nowgong; *kalá-ázár* is not now so prevalent in this district, and the number of deaths on tea gardens from this cause fell from 243 in 1899 to 129 in 1900.

Death-rate for the year.

32. The statement in the margin illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies of different nationalities. The improvement in the death-rates of coolies from the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces continues, the annual mortality among the former class having diminished from 34·1 to 31·4, and among the latter from 55·6 to 48·3 per mille. The Central Provinces rate, calculated, it must be remembered upon adults only, is still lamentably high. The low rate of mortality among Assamese labourers is doubtless due to their going away to their own homes when they get sick.

Mortality according to nationality.

Nationality.		Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	Deaths among adults of both classes.	Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.
1		2	3	4	5
Bengal..	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	181,108	2,879	32·9
		Women ..		3,089	
	Behar ...	Men ...	25,774	313	23·2
		Women ..		286	
	Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	68,096	736	24·5
		Women ..		937	
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.		Men ...	62,743	910	31·4
		Women ..		1,063	
Central Provinces ...		Men ...	50,470	1,193	48·3
		Women ..		1,245	
Madras		Men ...	12,620	197	33·4
		Women ..		225	
Assam		Men ...	14,113	72	9·9
		Women ..		67	
Total		Men ...	209,510	6,305	30·0
		Women ..	205,671	6,917	33·6
Grand total		...	415,231	13,222	31·8

N.B.—Deaths among coolies from Bombay (1 male and 1 female) and Nepal (4 males and 2 females) are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is small.

33. In Statement VIII details are given showing the deaths from different diseases and the total death-rate of Act labourers, non-Act adults, and children separately for each district, and for the province as a whole. The death-rate of Act labourers in 1900, 43·5 per mille, was practically the same as in 1899 (43·6). In most districts there is a reduced death-rate among Act adults; in Darrang, Sibsagar, and Cachar there was an increase. In Darrang and Sibsagar, the increase is very slight, but in Cachar the ratio rose from 31·6 in 1899 to 44·5 in 1900. In Nowgong the death-rate fell from 59·6 to 44·7 per thousand. The statement in the margin compares the mean strength of the total Act labour force, and the number of deaths from different diseases in 1899 and in 1900. The figures show a marked increase in deaths from cholera, coupled with diminished mortality from fever. The same feature is observable in the mortality statistics of the province generally. Cholera was prevalent in the recruiting districts, and on the steamers conveying coolies to Assam, and in some instances the disease was introduced in the tea gardens by new arrivals. In other cases it appears to have spread to the gardens from neighbouring villages, where it prevailed in an epidemic form owing to causes which have not been clearly traced.

Death-rate and causes of death among Act labourers.

	1899.	1900.
Mean strength ...	133,484	133,398
Deaths from—		
Cholera	465	635
Diarrhœa	511	569
Dysentery	1,234	1,170
Malarial fever ...	961	492
Anæmia	949	864
Respiratory diseases ...	723	842
Other causes ...	1,369	1,143
Total	5,812	5,815

34. The registration of mortality among Act labourers is fairly accurate, but the Chief Commissioner has come across cases in which deaths are not reported and are shown under the head of desertions. In other cases the agreements of sick coolies are cancelled with a view to reducing the rate of mortality among Act labourers. Whether these practices are increasing or not, it is difficult to say. In any case, the mortality is excessive, though it shows a considerable improvement over the previous decennial average, which is 51·6 per thousand. During the past year the mortality was twice as great as it was among the adults of the general population of the province. Some increase over that rate was to be expected, but an annually recurring mortality of 40 or 50 per thousand among a labouring population of more than 133,000 adults can only be considered a serious blot on the system of immigration into Assam. It is due to many causes, but not the least is the fact that the rate of wages is not only inadequate to maintain the labour force in health and comfort, but is also insufficient to attract the healthy class of coolie, which alone is fit to labour on a tea garden.

Deaths among non-Act labourers.

35. The death-rate among non-Act adults (26·2 per thousand) also shows a close agreement with the rate for 1899 (26·3). There was a slight increase in Cachar and Lakhimpur. It is well known that this registration is imperfect and cannot be relied on, but it is quite certain that the death-rate is much lower than among Act coolies. The cause of this is that non-Act coolies generally belong to a better class, and are better paid, and that Act labourers who have renewed their agreements under Act XIII represent the survival of the fittest.

Death-rate among children.

36. The death-rate among children rose from 19·8 per thousand in 1899 to 25·4 in 1900. All districts, except Nowgong and Kamrup, show an increase, which is attributed to improved registration. The year was generally a healthy one for children, except in Sibsagar. The Chief Commissioner does not believe that one-half of the mortality among children is duly registered.

Sick and destitute coolies.

37. The number of time-expired garden coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in 1900 was 786, as compared with 1,075 in 1899.

Four shelters for sick and destitute coolies attached to dispensaries were maintained in Cachar and 7 in Sylhet. Of the three shelters for able-bodied vagrants in Habiganj subdivision in Sylhet, one was closed during the year. Two hundred and sixty-six coolies were relieved at these shelters, 129 in Cachar and 137 in Sylhet. Of these, 235 were *ex*-tea-garden coolies, 20 coolies who had been employed on the Assam-Bengal Railway, and 11 other vagrants. Of the 263 coolies received at the dispensary shelters, 122 were discharged after recovery, 61 died, 56 left before recovery, and 24 remained under treatment at the close of the year. The rate of mortality was 23·1 per cent. Of the number discharged from the shelters, 22 were returned to tea gardens in Sylhet. The average stay of the coolies in all the four shelters of Cachar was 3 days. In Sylhet the average period of detention in the hospital sheds varied from 21 to 48 days. No explanation has been offered of this very high average. The total expenditure incurred in connection with the shelters during the year was Rs. 1,583-0-5.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

Unhealthy gardens.

38. Gardens are classed as unhealthy on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., the number of deaths from which the average is struck not being less than 10. The number of gardens on the unhealthy list in 1900 was 34 out of a total of 818, against 31 out of 821 in 1899. The percentage (4·1) is greater than that of 1899 (3·7), but considerably lower than that of 1898 (6·7). There was an increase in the number of unhealthy gardens in all districts, except Sylhet, Kamrup, and Nowgong. In Sylhet, no garden was on the unhealthy list.

39. In the following paragraphs a detailed account is given of the gardens which were unhealthy in each district, of the causes of mortality, and of the action taken by the Chief Commissioner in each case. It will be understood that the figures given refer only to that portion of the labour force in respect of which the garden was unhealthy. The death-rate for the year (column 5) is the sum of the death-rates for each half-year taken separately, calculated on the mean labour force of the half-year.

CACHAR—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of bodies anchylostomatis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population ...	1. Kumbir ...	162	18	111·1	4	...	2	...	6	1	5
	2. Barnibraes ...	59	10	169·5	1	...	...	1	5	...	3
	Total (Act) ...	221	28	126·6	5	...	2	1	11	1	8
Non-Act population ...	3. Abongcherra ...	364	36	98·9	19	3	6	8	...	...	...
	4. Naraindhar ...	252	19	75·3	12	...	1	6	...	...	...
	5. Lallamukh ...	1,675	126	75·2	18	3	34	...	44	...	27
	6. Vernerpur ...	1,232	88	71·4	37	7	6	3	...	...	35
	Total (non-Act) ...	3,523	269	76·3	86	13	47	17	44	...	62
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

(1) *Kumbir.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. Sanitary and other arrangements are reported to be good. No special action was considered necessary.

(2) *Barnibraes.*—This garden was last unhealthy in 1895. The manager was called upon to improve the water-supply. The large proportion of deaths from anæmia in both these gardens is evidence that a bad class of coolies was imported.

(3) *Abongcherra.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. The high mortality in 1900 was due to an outbreak of cholera. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to call upon the manager to improve the water supply, which is reported to be defective.

(4) *Naraindhar.*—This is a purely non-Act garden, which is usually healthy. The high mortality in 1900 was due to an outbreak of cholera. Out of 19 deaths, 12 were due to cholera. The sanitary and other arrangements are satisfactory, and no special action was considered necessary.

(5) *Lallamukh.*—This is a purely non-Act garden. It was last unhealthy in 1897. As the management is taking steps to improve the sanitary arrangements of the garden, no special action was considered necessary. The large number of deaths from anæmia betrays bad recruiting.

(6) *Vernerpur.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and had not been unhealthy for many years past. There are no Act labourers. The high mortality of 1900 was due

chiefly to cholera. The sanitary arrangements of the garden are good. No special action was considered necessary.

KAMRUP—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Amchong ...	90	11	122·2	...	...	1	7	2	...	1
Non-Act population	*Nil.*										
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Amchong.*—This garden was declared unfit for the residence of Act labourers in 1899, as stated in the report for that year. On a representation from the manager of the garden, the Chief Commissioner allowed him time up to the first week of November 1900 to build lines for his coolies at the Belguri tea estate, where he proposed to transfer them. The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 26th October 1900, and after his inspection, the Deputy Commissioner carried out the Chief Commissioner's order by cancelling 80 contracts and permitting 45 Act-I labourers to be transferred to Belguri. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon, when no special action was considered necessary. It is now a purely non-Act garden.

DARRANG—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Dysentery.	Diarrhœa.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Gogra	65	14	215·4	10	1	...	...	2	...	1
	2. Sessa or Daputa ...	180	17	94·4	1	7	1	1	3	2	2
	3. Diplonga ...	145	12	82·8	2	1	..	1	2	4	2
	4. Ketella ...	288	29	100·7	...	13	2	1	2	5	6
	5. New Addabari ...	307	23	74·9	1	4	...	3	6	6	3
	Total (Act) ...	985	95	96·4	14	26	3	6	15	17	14
Non-Act population ...	6. Tarajuli ...	565	67	118·6	...	18	5	2	...	3	39
	7. Kacharigaon ...	176	19	107·9	1	4	...	...	2	1	11
	Total (Non-Act) ...	741	86	116·0	1	22	5	2	2	4	50
Act and Non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Gogra.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The high mortality during 1900 was due to an outbreak of cholera. No special action was considered necessary. The Commissioner has been asked to furnish further information regarding the health of the new coolies and the wages earned.

(2) *Sessa or Daputa.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The heavy mortality during 1900 was due to dysentery among new arrivals. The Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, was requested to call upon the manager of the garden to improve the defective water-supply.

(3) *Diplonga.*—This garden was last unhealthy in 1896. The suggestion of the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, that the management should be required to improve the coolie lines, was approved.

(4) *Ketella.*—The high death-rate in 1900 was due to importation of unsuitable coolies. The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 26th June 1901, and a further report is awaited from the Commissioner.

(5) *New Addabari.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1899 also. It was ordered that no more coolies from the Central Provinces should be recruited until, in the Civil Surgeon's opinion, it was sufficiently opened out. The garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 11th May 1901, when it showed signs of considerable improvement.

(6) *Tarajuli.*—This garden had not been unhealthy since 1897. The unhealthiness in 1900 was due to heavy mortality among children, especially those of new arrivals from the famine-stricken districts. No special action was considered necessary.

(7) *Kacharigaon.*—This is a new garden. The high death-rate in 1900 was due to heavy mortality among children.

The following action was taken in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1899:

(*a*) *Paisajuli.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 5th December 1900. His report showed an improvement in the health of the labour force, and no special action was considered necessary beyond conveying a warning to the management against importing unsuitable labour. At the next inspection a careful enquiry will be made on the subject of the registration of the deaths of non-Act coolies.

(*b*) *Singri.*—A petition was submitted by certain coolies on this estate, complaining about systematic ill-usage on the part of the late manager, Mr. Scott. An enquiry was ordered, and it was ascertained that the deaths occurring on this estate were systematically unreported, being entered as desertions, and in spite of this, the recorded death-rate among all coolies for 1899 was 2·07 per thousand, and for 1900 it was 1·12 per thousand. The Chief Commissioner is afraid that the facts of the complaint were substantially true, and that this case illustrates the deplorable result of the power which the Act gives to an unscrupulous manager over his coolies. It was ordered that proceedings under section 163 of Act I of 1882 should be instituted at once against Mr. Scott, but as it was found that he had left the garden, they were subsequently dropped.

(*c*) *Kabira.*—Through an oversight, the Chief Commissioner's order for the cancellation of Act labourers were not given effect to during the year, but the contracts of all Act labourers have since been cancelled.

NOWGONG—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Sukimbari ...	95	16	160·3	3	...	1	9	...	1	2
	2. Seconee ...	207	17	83·3	5	1	2	2	...	1	6
	Total (Act) ...	302	33	109·8	8	1	3	11	...	2	8
Non-Act population ...	*Nil.*										
Act and Non-Act population taken together.	*Nil.*										

(1) *Sukimbari.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1899 also, and under the Chief Commissioner's order it was closed to new importations of Act labour.

(2) *Seconee.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The arrangements are satisfactory, and no action was considered necessary.

The following action was taken in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1899:

(*a*) *Balijuri.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 13th December 1900. No special action was considered necessary. The defects pointed out previously have all been remedied.

(*b*) *Amluckie.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 6th December 1900. His report disclosed a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, and the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, was instructed to warn the manager that, if he failed in the obligation imposed upon him by section 121 of Act I of 1882, he would be prosecuted. It was observed that the number of fractional *hazíris* had increased since the last previous inspection. The garden was again inspected by the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon on the 25th April 1901, when no special action was considered necessary.

(*c*) *Owguri.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 20th December 1900. No special action was considered necessary:

SIBSAGAR—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or cachexy of hands.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Amguri ...	385	36	91·2	5	1	11	6	6	1	6
	2. Tingalibam ...	314	28	87·4	1	1	11	3	1	7	4
	3. Halunguri ...	250	20	78·6	...	4	5	2	...	1	8
	4. Missamara ...	443	32	73·4	7	...	14	1	...	3	7
	5. Latabari ...	215	31	144·3	16	2	5	...	..	...	8
	6. Nagora ...	150	18	125·9	...	3	9	...	...	2	4
	Total (Act) ...	1,757	165	93·9	29	11	55	12	7	14	37
Non-Act population	7. Dholebagan ...	532	39	73·2	2	...	17	2	...	8	10
	8. Halmira ...	269	22	80·9	...	4	4	...	...	6	8
	Total (non-Act) ...	801	61	76·1	2	4	21	2	..	14	18
Act and non-Act population taken together	9. Rajabari (Lakwa Tea Company.)	603	52	86·1	3	5	12	5	...	18	9

(1) *Amguri.*—This is usually a healthy garden. The high death-rate in 1900 was due to the importation of an unsuitable class of labourers. This garden is managed by Mr. Buckingham, and it is needless to say that it is one of the best managed gardens in the province, but the fact that the recruiting during the past year was unsatisfactory is clearly shown by the rate of mortality among new arrivals. Out of 254 Act labourers imported during the year 1900, no fewer than 26 died.

(2) *Tingalibam.*—This garden has been unhealthy since 1898, the mortality having varied from 132 to 65 per thousand. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 11th November 1900, and the Chief Commissioner directed its closure, under section 132 of Act I of 1882, to all new importations of Act labour. The Civil Surgeon wrote of this garden:

Heavy mortality seemed to have been due to inferior coolies having been sent up when first class coolies were ordered. I am informed by the manager that many of these coolies were actually taken from Calcutta slums. I actually found a few natives of Howrah amongst them. Efficient coolies can never be made from such people, especially in a newly-opened garden. There was better recruitment later on, and the coolies who are now on the garden may almost

be described as survivals of the fittest. The manager has evidently tried his best in the matter of procuring suitable coolies: on one occasion he had to send back, *i.e.*, refuse to take delivery of, a whole batch of 22 adults who were unfit for any class of garden labour. The coolies in the garden, such as they are, are taken good care of etc., etc.

No case could afford clearer evidence of the insufficiency of the present statutory rate of wages to attract suitable labourers, and of the terrible mortality which results among the half-starved refuse of the labour population who are sent up in their place.

(3) *Halungurí.*—The garden was last unhealthy in 1898. The Civil Surgeon reports that it is a well-managed garden: the heavy death-rate is, however, a blot on the management, and the Chief Commissioner is not satisfied that it is altogether due to non-preventible causes. It is a remark of general application that no garden can be said to be satisfactorily managed when the death-rate continues to be as high as it does here.

(4) *Missamara.*—The garden was unhealthy in 1897 and again in 1900. It was reported that the agreements of certain Act coolies had been cancelled, with a view to diminishing the rate of mortality amongst Act labourers. The action of the Civil Surgeon in ordering that such coolies should be replaced on the list of Act labourers was approved. No further action was considered necessary.

(5) *Latabarí.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1898, but healthy in 1899. The high death-rate in 1900 was due to an epidemic of cholera. The Civil Surgeon's report disclosed that the condition of the Act labourers was unsatisfactory, owing to the insufficiency of their earnings to maintain them in health and comfort. It appears that quarter *hasiris* are common, and that sick allowances are not regularly paid. The *hasiri* book shows that the sweating of labour is carried in this garden to the lowest point. The Chief Commissioner has, with reference to the provisions of section 153 of Act VI of 1901, called upon the manager of this estate to show cause why the labour contracts of Act labourers employed on the garden should not be cancelled.

(6) *Nagora.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1899 also. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 21st November 1900. His report disclosed a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. It appeared that the provisions of section 121 of Act I of 1882, which require that subsistence allowance or sick diet shall be given to sick labourers, had been ignored by the management, and that sums had been illegally debited against the coolies on this account, as well as on account of rewards paid for the arrest of deserters. The continued high rate of mortality is directly attributable to the insufficient wages paid to the coolies in consequence of these so-called advances. The present manager was called upon to write off the whole of the advances outstanding against the coolies, except such amounts as might be found by an Inspector on enquiry to be fairly and reasonably due from them, and was informed that, failing compliance with this condition, the agreements of the labourers affected would be cancelled and the garden closed to Act labour. The garden was again inspected by the Assistant Commissioner, Golaghat, on the 22nd May 1901, and by the Civil Surgeon on the 13th June 1901. Their reports show a satisfactory and greatly improved state of things, the advances outstanding against the coolies having been written off. In view, however, of the history of the garden, it will receive the careful attention of the local officers for some time to come.

(7) *Dholébagan.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and its sanitary condition is good. No special action was considered necessary.

(8) *Halmira.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and no action was considered necessary.

(9) *Rajabarí* (*Lakwa Tea Company*).—This garden was unhealthy in 1898, but healthy in 1899. The health of the garden is now fairly satisfactory, and wages are high. No special action was considered necessary.

The following action was taken in respect of the gardens mentioned below, which were unhealthy in 1899:

(*a*) *Borhat.*—This garden was inspected by the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar on the 10th July 1900. His report disclosed a disgraceful state of affairs. Wages were insufficient, quarter *hasiris* being common, and heavy advances were debited on account of food supplied at the "hotel," the result being that the coolies were absolutely beggared. Advances were also debited on account of rewards paid for the arrest of deserters. No supply of rice was kept for sale to the coolies at the contract price, although the local market price exceeded Rs. 3 a maund. Sick coolies were turned out of the garden, their contracts being cancelled by mutual consent. The hospital accommodation was bad and insufficient. There was no schedule of tasks, and registers were not kept as required by law. As the inspection had not been made by the Civil Medical Officer of the district, the Chief Commissioner was unable to take action under section 132 of Act I of 1882; he accordingly directed the holding of a Committee,

which met at the garden on the 31st December 1900. The Committee's report would have amply justified the closing of the garden to Act labour. Unfortunately, owing to an informality in the proceedings, this action could not be taken, and, moreover, by the time the report reached the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Adams, a planter of long experience, had taken charge of the garden himself, as managing partner, and had already introduced radical changes in the management, which Mr. Cotton considered should be given a fair trial. The Commissioner was instructed to cause the garden to be again inspected by the Civil Surgeon, and to take steps to prosecute Mr. Steward, the late manager, for his gross disobedience of the provisions of the law. Mr. Steward, however, escaped prosecution by leaving the country.

The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 2nd April 1901, when a striking improvement was found in the condition of affairs and no special action was considered necessary. The garden will again be inspected next cold weather.

(*b*) *Nagadhuli.*—A Committee was held on this garden, under section 128A of Act I of 1882, on the 13th August 1900. The Committee found that the garden was not unfit for the residence of any particular class of labourers. Though Mr. Cotton did not dispute the Committee's decision, the heavy continuous mortality on this garden is a very serious matter, and if the measures adopted do not result in improvement, he will have no hesitation in closing it to Act labour. This garden was again twice inspected by the Civil Surgeon during the year.

(*c*) *Dehingapar.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 24th November 1900. His report disclosed a very discreditable state of affairs. Wages were insufficient, and the excessive proportion of fractional *hasiris* indicated over-strict management. Rice was not supplied to the coolies at the contract price of Rs. 3 a maund, the local market price being in excess of that rate. Sick coolies were not credited with subsistence allowance in lieu of diet as required by the law. With regard to the supply of rice, the manager submitted an explanation to the effect that rice was supplied to the coolies for cash at Rs. 3 a maund, and on credit at local rates. The Chief Commissioner directed that a special enquiry on this point should be made at the next inspection. The garden was again inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 12th March 1901. In the meanwhile, there had been a change of management, rice was then being supplied at Rs. 3 a maund, and there was some improvement in the coolies' wages. No special action was considered necessary beyond drawing the attention of the new manager to the provisions of section 125(2) of Act VI of 1901, under which he is bound to provide for each labourer, on six days of the week, sufficient work to enable him to earn at least his minimum wage, and failing such due provision of work, the labourer is entitled to claim the minimum wage, if he can show that he was able and willing to work for the same.

LAKHIMPUR—

Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Causes of death.						
					Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or cachexia.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Act population	1. Namdang	100	10	100·0	...	3	1	1	...	3	2
	2. Ledo Syndicate ...	199	15	75·3	1	3	5	2	...	1	3
	3. Sillonibari ...	862	64	74·2	7	5	26	1	10	...	15
	4. Harmutty	325	25	76·9	19	2	...	1	...	...	3
	Total (Act) ...	1,486	114	76·7	27	13	32	5	10	4	23
Non-Act population	5. Dekajuli ...	98	17	173·4	...	4	1	...	...	2	10
	6. Titadimaru ...	127	10	78·7	...	3	4	...	...	2	1
	7. Deomuli	351	49	139·6	2	1	12	15	9	7	3
	8. Bordobi	181	13	71·8	...	...	5	3	...	...	5
	9. Dulahat	278	20	71·9	...	1	11	2	...	...	6
	Total (Non-Act) ...	1,035	109	105·3	2	9	33	20	9	11	25
Act and non-Act population taken together.	*Nil*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

(1) *Namdang.*—This coal-mine has for the first time appeared on the unhealthy list. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 27th May 1901. The most serious feature was the large number of desertions. The Commissioner has been requested to furnish further information regarding desertions, tasks, and the rate of wages.

(2) *Ledo Syndicate.*—This is a new garden, opened in 1899. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 20th April 1901. The Chief Commissioner has asked the Commissioner to submit a further report regarding the procedure followed in making the inspection, on receipt of which final orders will be passed.

(3) *Sillonibari.*—This garden was last unhealthy in 1895. Cases of anæmia and dysentery are numerous, and are apparently caused by insufficient feeding, the result of high tasks and low wages. A further report has been called for from the Commissioner, on receipt of which the Chief Commissioner will pass final orders.

(4) *Harmutty.*—This is usually a healthy garden. It came on the unhealthy list owing to an outbreak of cholera; but from the Civil Surgeon's report no definite conclusion could be arrived at respecting the origin and cause of the outbreak. The Civil Surgeon has been requested to make a second inspection of the garden, enquiring fully into the causes which led to the outbreak of cholera, and also to the cause of the low wages.

(5) *Dekajuli.*—This garden was unhealthy in 1897 and 1898. In the latter year it was closed to new importations of Act labour. The garden, having been healthy in 1899, was reopened to the importation of Act labourers, but it again appeared on the unhealthy list in 1900, the unhealthiness being due to heavy mortality amongst children. The Chief Commissioner has approved of the action of the Deputy Commissioner in calling upon the manager to carry out certain recommendations made by the Civil Surgeon.

(6) *Titadimaru.*—The garden was last unhealthy in 1897. The unhealthiness in 1900 was due to a large number of deaths among children. The wages of Act women are very low. A second inspection of the garden will be made, at which the causes of these low wages will be fully enquired into.

(7) *Deomuli.*—The garden has come on the unhealthy list in consequence of the high death-rate among children, who constitute the bulk of the non-Act population. The Civil Surgeon's report shows that the state of the labour force is unsatisfactory. The Commissioner has been requested to call upon the management to carry out the Civil Surgeon's recommendations regarding the mustering of coolies and the feeding of orphans at the hotel. The management has been warned that failure to comply with these recommendations will render the garden liable to be closed to Act labour.

(8) *Bardobi.*—This is a new garden, opened in 1898, and has been continuously unhealthy since that year. It was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 22nd March 1901, and his report showed that the health of the garden had improved, but the low average wages and the high proportion of desertions indicated that the state of the labour force had not been satisfactory. The Commissioner was requested to have a special enquiry made at the next inspection of the garden with regard to the causes of low wages and desertions.

(9) *Dulahat.*—This is usually a healthy garden; it came on the unhealthy list owing to heavy mortality among children. The Deputy Commissioner has taken steps to reduce the task rates on the Civil Surgeon's recommendation. He has also been asked to insist on the improvement of the water-supply.

The Tara garden, which was unhealthy in 1899, was inspected by the Civil Surgeon. He reported that sixty or seventy per cent. of the force were anæmic and weedy, and that, in concert with the Civil Medical Officer employed on behalf of the tea-garden, he had repatriated 45 labourers then and there. The cause of this was bad recruitment. He writes:—"I found *Telis, Napits, Halwais*, Muhammadans, and others sent up as Gonds." He reports also that there were many illegal advances debited against coolies and deducted from their wages, "including 12 cases in which rewards were paid for deserters recovered." When labourers desert, their employers naturally adopt every means to recover them, and are in the habit of paying five rupees or more to the garden chaukidar, to the ferryman who may intercept them, or to any one who may bring them back. It has become an outrageous and far from uncommon custom to debit this reward as an advance against the recovered labourer, and to deduct it from his wages until the amount is paid.

40. The facts of these cases, some of which have been given with a little more detail than usual, will be found to afford ample justification for all the Chief Commissioner has said or written on the subject of insufficient wages and bad recruitment, the two conditions which are always connected with mismanagement, where it exists, on Assam tea-gardens.

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES.

Offences in which tea planters or garden coolies were concerned.

41. Statement IX gives particulars of cases filed during 1900 in which tea planters or garden coolies were concerned. Of 1,024 complaints by managers of absence or desertion of coolies under Act XIII of 1859 or Act I of 1882, only 45 per cent. resulted in conviction. There was a considerable increase in the number of cases in which coolies were brought to trial for unlawful assembly, rioting, assault on, or insult to, tea planters or their servants, 54 such cases having been instituted in 1900, compared with 30 in 1899, and 213 coolies convicted, against 182. Twenty-six complaints were made by coolies against garden managers, charging them with the use of force or intimidation in order to procure the renewal of contracts. Of the 26 complaints, 25 occurred in the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet, two only resulting in a conviction. Complaints of this kind are sometimes made in the form of a miscellaneous petition, in which the coolie, without wishing to institute a criminal case, asks for an order permitting him to leave the garden. The allegations of intimidation and wrongful confinement contained in such petitions are often unfounded or exaggerated, but the Chief Commissioner considers it proper that careful enquiry should be made in all such cases. It will depend on the facts elicited by enquiry in each case whether a criminal prosecution should be instituted or not. In Lakhimpur, 62 coolies filed complaints to the effect that, though they had completed the periods of their contracts, they had not been given discharge certificates. It was found that in the majority of cases, the complainants had left the garden without waiting for discharge certificates, and in the others the coolies had to work off certain days of absence from labour endorsed on their contracts.

In the next chapter will be found further observations dealing with the relations between employers and labourers, and an account of the more important cases which occurred during the year.

Desertions.

42. Particulars regarding desertions among adults will be found in Statement X. There was a decrease in the number of desertions of Act labourers in all districts, except Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The percentage of desertions has fallen from 3·01 in 1899 to 2·95 in 1900. The percentage of desertions among non-Act adult labourers also shows a decrease, 3·92, against 4·04 in 1899. The percentage of desertions among all adult labourers was 3·60, compared with 3·70 in 1899 and 4·43 for 1898. Although there is an improvement in the percentage of desertions, the total number shows a slight increase from 14,807 to 15,021, and the figures do not suggest any satisfactory reflection on the working of the labour Acts in tea estates.

43. The following statement shows the proportion of desertions to labour force, including children, on healthy and unhealthy gardens :

District.	Mean strength.		Number of desertions.		Percentage of desertions.		
	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Healthy gardens.	Unhealthy gardens.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	119,770	9,102	3,360	88	2·80	·96	2·67
Sylhet	147,416	...	6,759	...	4·59	...	4·59
Kamrup	3,114	473	198	16	6·35	3·38	5·96
Darrang	72,635	5,402	2,095	142	2·88	2·63	2·87
Nowgong	19,234	1,396	560	183	2·90	13·37	3·60
Sibsagar	142,340	8,654	3,063	227	2·15	2·62	2·17
Lakhimpur	128,598	6,760	3,562	187	2·76	2·76	2·76
Total	633,107	31,787	19,597	843	3·09	2·65	3·07
„ of 1899	622,981	17,174	18,555	1,005	2·98	5·85	3·06

The figures show that the healthiness or unhealthiness of a garden has had less influence than usual on the number of desertions.

Cases under Act XIII of 1859.

44. Of 430 complaints made under Act XIII of 1859, convictions resulted in the case of 139 coolies. There is a large increase in the number of such cases punished with imprisonment, for, of the 139 coolies convicted, 58 were sent to jail, compared with 20 coolies imprisoned out of 149 convicted in 1899. In Sibsagar the number of coolies convicted under Act XIII was 46, of whom only 6 were sent to jail. In Sylhet the number convicted was 47, of whom 40 were imprisoned.

Absconding of coolies into Hill Tippera.

45. It was noticed in last year's report that complaints had been made by tea planters, whose gardens lie along the Hill Tippera border, that the Hill Tippera authorities gave no assistance in the recovery of Act-XIII coolies who had absconded across the frontier. As the result of a correspondence with the Government of Bengal on the subject, an arrangement has been come to by which a special procedure is laid down for the execution of warrants providing for the speedy execution of all warrants and also for the identification of absconders.

CHAPTER VII.

RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

Relations between employers and employed.

46. The relations between employers and labourers were unchanged, and outbreaks of ill-feeling inevitably occur from time to time. Ten cases of serious rioting were reported by the District Officers, of which five took place in the district of Lakhimpur. With regard to these cases, the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, remarks:

The immediate cause of riots on gardens is frequently an assault by one of the European staff. But in such cases the coolies have generally come up prepared to risk and sometimes go the length of tempting the manager to strike them.

Blows given by managers, or more commonly by assistant managers, to coolies, either for bad work or refusal to work, were the immediate cause of most of the rioting cases which occurred during the year.

47. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang writes:

My impression is that every year the coolie is better cared for. The planters themselves realise that a contented and healthy labour force, the first essential to successful management, cannot be maintained without fair and even generous treatment, and constant attention to the material comforts of its members. The publicity attaching to cases of systematic ill-treatment, and the consequences entailed, are sufficient in most cases to deter any who may not be alive to the necessity for treating the coolie well. In this district, where a number of leading planters are gentlemen, who have been for years in the district, and who command respect not only from their own labour force, but also from the natives of the district, high notions exist of what is fair treatment of the coolie, and the result is that, with very few exceptions, gardens are admirably managed and the labour force contented and healthy.

On this, however, the Commissioner remarks—

Nevertheless, two of the worst cases of oppression reported last year were in this district. In one case a planter was fined Rs. 500 for ordering a woman to be flogged. In another the coolies were abominably ill-treated by the planter manager, and the Chief Commissioner ordered his prosecution.

An account of one of the cases referred to by the Commissioner will be found below. The other case has already been alluded to in the account given of unhealthy gardens as one of continuous gross and systematic ill-usage on the part of an employer towards his coolies, which came to notice at the inspection of a garden. There are no doubt model gardens in the Darrang district, where the management is most satisfactory in all respects, but the Chief Commissioner considers that Captain Cole's general estimate is more optimistic than the facts warrant.

48. On this subject, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet remarks—

Nearly all the complaints against tea-planters are brought by coolies on gardens in the Karimganj subdivision; most of the complaints refer to detention of coolies after the expiry of their agreements. Agreements under Act XIII of 1859 are generally executed for a certain number of days, and when any question arises as to the expiry of the term of an agreement, a day is held by the planters to mean a full task. Under such a system, an agreement for a term of 939 days may be prolonged indefinitely. The working of Act XIII of 1859 in this district is far from satisfactory. I agree with Mr. Porteous that agreements under this Act should be in writing and should be registered at the Subdivisional Officers' courts, and also that the term of such agreements should be limited to one year. At present, everything is left to the discretion of Magistrates trying cases under the Act, and this discretion is exercised in different ways by different Magistrates.

The Chief Commissioner concurs with the opinion of Messrs. Porteous and Lees, and looks with unconcealed anxiety on the working of Act XIII of 1859 both in the Surma Valley and in the Assam Valley, where its application is rapidly extending. A coolie who has contracted under Act XIII is very little more of a free man than one who has entered into an agreement under Act VI of 1901. It is a very serious matter that "when any question arises as to the expiry of the term of an agreement, a day is held by the planters to mean a full task." In this respect the Act operates with greater harshness than the Labour and Emigration Act. The law is, however, vaguely worded, and the discretion left to Magistrates in applying and interpreting its provisions has generally been soundly exercised.

49. An account of the more important cases of collision between employers and labourers which were reported during the year is given below:

(1) Mr. Hatch, manager of the Balicherra tea garden in Sylhet, was charged with voluntarily causing hurt to a coolie for the purpose of extorting an agreement, and was fined Rs. 50. This punishment being considered inadequate, the High Court was moved to enhance the sentence under section 439 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The High Court, however, declined to interfere, and dismissed the application.

(2) Mr. Cattell, manager of the Eraligul tea estate in the district of Sylhet, was charged with wrongful confinement of the wife and the daughter of a chaukidar coolie, and with severely assaulting him. Mr. Cattell was sentenced to a fine of Rs. 150. The Chief Commissioner considered the punishment inadequate, but, having regard to the decision of the High Court in the case of Mr. Hatch, he was not prepared to refer the case for enhancement of sentence.

(3) A somewhat serious assault was perpetrated on Mr. Calman, Assistant Manager of the Alinagar estate, in the South Sylhet subdivision of Sylhet. One of the coolies concerned was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment, another to one year, and five men to three months. The case was originated by some violence on the part of the planter, which, as the accused said, took their *izzat* from them, but as the assault was undoubtedly a serious one, the Chief Commissioner saw no reason for interference.

(4) In accordance with the order of Mr. Mortimer, Assistant Manager of the Phulbari tea estate in Darrang, some coolies assembled at his bungalow. Mr. Mortimer asked a coolie why he had not completed his task, on which the coolie advanced towards him in a threatening way. Mr. Mortimer struck him, and the coolie thereupon aimed a blow at Mr. Mortimer's head with his *kodali*. Mr. Mortimer raised his hands and intercepted the blow, but the force of it caused him to fall into a ditch. He was then rescued by another assistant on the garden. The coolie was sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment. The Chief Commissioner was of opinion that Mr. Mortimer provoked the assault on himself by first assaulting one of the coolies, but as the attack on him was of a serious nature, he saw no reason to interfere with the order.

(5) A coolie woman who had absconded from the Phulbari garden was recaptured. On being brought back to the garden she was flogged in the most barbarous manner at the order of Mr. T. J. Walker, the Manager, by three of the garden employés in presence of all the labourers on the estate. The manager and the garden servants concerned in this outrage were prosecuted and convicted under sections 352 and 109 of the Indian Penal Code, the manager being sentenced to a fine of Rs. 500, and the others to six weeks' rigorous imprisonment. Mr. Walker appealed to the High Court, but the sentence on him was confirmed.

(6) Mr. Wilcox, Assistant Manager of the Singrimari estate in Darrang, had occasion to find fault with the hoeing at an out-garden, and struck one of the dafadars with a cane. Thereupon, some thirty Kachari coolies threatened to assault him with hoes in their hands, but no assault was actually committed. On being prosecuted, six coolies were sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment. In reporting this case, the Commissioner, Mr. Melitus, made the cynical remark—

> As between man and man, I should consider the sentence excessive, but as between the Manager of a garden and his coolies, I am not prepared to say that it is excessive.

Mr. Fuller, who was officiating for Mr. Cotton, recorded that in his opinion the sentences were too severe.

(7) On the 15th October 1900, Mr. *Greig*, Superintendent of the Rajmai tea estate in the district of Sibsagar, receiving information that some of his coolies had been stealing firewood in the lines, summoned them to his bungalow, and struck one of the coolies some blows on the head with a stick. The coolie fell down and died on the spot. Mr. Greig was placed on his trial before the Sessions Judge on a charge of causing the death of the coolie. The jury unanimously returned a verdict of acquittal, which was accepted by the Sessions Judge.

(8) On *Kali pujah* day, the 24th October 1900, the Sonthal coolies of the Halunguri estate in Sibsagar wanted a holiday. The Manager, Mr. James Begg, went down to the lines on horseback to get them to work. The coolies then threw anything they could at him and surrounded him with sticks in their hands. Mr. Begg was not injured, but his syce and two mohurrirs were slightly hurt. One of the coolies was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment, two to five months, and seventeen to short terms. The incident was a trifling one, although serious notice was taken of it, and it is evident that there would have been no disturbance if the manager had allowed a day's holiday to his coolies on the occasion of a festival which they are accustomed to commemorate in their own country.

(9) Mr. Hennessy, the Assistant Manager of the Hukanpukri tea garden in the district of Lakhimpur, was sitting in the veranda of his bungalow, paying "*ticca* pice" to some three hundred coolies. A coolie objected to the sum which was given him. Mr. Hennessy told the man to be quiet and to wait till the paying was finished. He refused to be silent and demanded an immediate enquiry, upon which Mr. Hennessy went down and struck him with his fist. Mr. Hennessy then went up to the veranda again. His

action had aroused the anger of the assembled coolies, and Mr. More, the manager, who arrived at that moment, found a serious disturbance commencing. He heard what had happened, and asked the coolie who had been struck to go away, promising to enquire into his grievance. The coolie was about to go, when his wife and another woman dragged him back. Meantime, the crowd pressed forward to the veranda stairs to attack Mr. Hennessy, but Mr. More managed to keep them back for some time. Pieces of brick were thrown at Mr. Hennessy. Mr. More continued to reason with the coolies, and finally asked the native doctor to speak to them. No sooner had the latter begun to speak, than the mob surged into the bungalow, forcing the three Europeans there to escape through the bath-room. Fourteen coolies, two of whom were women, were found guilty and sentenced to terms of rigorous imprisonment, varying from six months to five years. This case occurred during Mr. Cotton's absence on privilege leave, but in his opinion the orders passed were unduly severe.

(10) Four coolies of the Singlijan tea estate in the district of Lakhimpur filed separate complaints of assault against Mr. Bernard, the manager of the garden. In three cases the charges were not substantiated, and Mr. Bernard was acquitted. In the fourth it was admitted that he had seized a coolie who was suspected of helping others to abscond, and given him several cuts with a riding whip. Mr. Bernard was fined Rs. 100 under section 352, Indian Penal Code. The coolie, who had an agreement under Act XIII, was released from it, and was awarded Rs. 20 of the fine as compensation.

(11) Upon a number of coolies leaving the estate to complain against the same manager, he caused them to be stopped and brought back to the garden. They were then taken direct to the manager's bungalow, and made to stand in a line under the veranda. The manager, with his clerk and the native doctor, questioned the coolies as to why they had gone, and in the course of the enquiry the wife of one of the coolies sat down. The manager, on seeing this, seized her by the hair with the intention of making her stand up. This enraged the husband, who instantly pulled up a split bamboo and attempted to strike the manager. Two other coolies followed his example. The attack was, however, averted. The three coolies were sentenced to one month's rigorous imprisonment under section 352, Indian Penal Code. Having regard to the circumstances of the case, the Chief Commissioner considered that the coolies should have been acquitted, and as soon as the case came to his notice he directed the remission of the unexpired portion of the sentence.

(12) Mr. Jamieson, Assistant Manager of the Talap tea estate in the Lakhimpur district, having occasion to find fault with the method of plucking going on, used some force to a sardar. Mr. Jamieson is a newly-joined assistant and not familiar with the language. His action was misunderstood, and a riot ensued and Mr. Jamieson was assaulted. He made his escape to the Manager's bungalow. For this offence three coolies were sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and six to six months. The prisoners did not appeal, but the Chief Commissioner considered the sentence of one year to be excessive, and reduced it to six months.

50. Mr. Cotton has taken the pains to refer at some length to these cases, principally because they illustrate the fact, to which he drew attention in a previous annual report, that there is an undoubted tendency among Magistrates in Assam to inflict severe sentences in cases in which coolies are charged with committing offences against their employers and to impose light, and sometimes inadequate, punishments upon employers when they are convicted of offences against labourers. The position of a Magistrate in Assam is certainly a very difficult one, and it is impossible for them to be altogether uninfluenced by their environment and their natural feelings towards their fellow-countrymen who are engaged in the development of an important industry, but this renders it all the more necessary for them to be on their guard against any display, or apparent display, of partiality. About four years ago the Chief Commissioner received a representation on behalf of the tea industry, protesting that insufficient sentences were being passed by Magistrates in cases in which coolies were concerned. He replied then that he did not share the opinion of the Association, and he must now emphatically declare that he has never come across a case in which coolies were inadequately punished. On another occasion a deputation of planters complained to him of the hostile attitude of a certain Magistrate, but Mr. Cotton has only to say that this officer, whom he believes to be a conscientious officer, has appeared to him to display undue leniency more than once when planters have been arraigned before him for punishment. It is impossible to read the accounts of the cases of which an abstract has been given above without feeling that justice has not been always well and duly administered between man and man. During the current year the same tendency has again been observed in a marked degree, and special orders have been passed with reference to the sentences inflicted in particular cases.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Changes in the Law or Rules.

51. The most important question which occupied the attention of the Chief Commissioner during the year was the amendment of the law relating to Emigration in Assam. The changes effected in the law by the repeal of Act I of 1882, and the enactment of Act VI of 1901 in its place, have been brought prominently to the notice of District Officers by the Chief Commissioner's Resolution No. 748-56R., dated the 4th April 1901.

Inspections.

52. In Statement XI particulars relating to the inspection of gardens are given. At the beginning of the year 1900, there were 823 gardens on the register. One new garden was opened in each of the districts of Darrang and Kamrup. In Sylhet, one garden was closed. In Sibsagar, one new garden was opened and two gardens were amalgamated with others. In Lakhimpur, one garden was closed, four amalgamated with other gardens, while one small garden, submitting no returns, was struck off the register. The total number of gardens in the register for the province at the end of the year was thus 817. Of these, 752 were liable to inspection, as employing Act labourers, or more than 50 non-Act labourers. Of the gardens liable to inspection, 749 were inspected during the year. Four gardens in Sylhet, which were not inspected during 1899, were inspected twice in 1900.

53. The Chief Commissioner does not conceal from himself that the inspection of tea gardens is often unsatisfactory and imperfect. This is not the fault of inspecting officers, who do their duty on the whole as well as they can. Mr. Cotton desires to express his obligations to these officers, and in particular to Captain Leventon, Civil Surgeon of Sibsagar, who during the past year made some most searching, thorough, and valuable inspections. Occasionally, he has been disappointed at the incomplete enquiry held into what were evidently very bad cases. The system, however, and not the individual, is most to blame. What Captain Leventon wrote in a recent report is quite true:

> Before concluding, I would desire to point out that in all cases the manager's word must be taken for the "task schedule." There is absolutely no means of verifying it or ascertaining its possible correctness without a prolonged residence on the garden or a daily supervision of the measuring up of the work. Task schedules need never be stuck up, for all the faith that can be placed in them in very many cases.

And what Colonel Hopkinson (at that time Commissioner of the Assam Valley and afterwards President of the Tea Association in London) wrote* on the subject of wages more than thirty years ago is equally true now. He said—

* Quoted in Sir William Grey's letter to the Government of India, dated the 27th December 1868.

> A minimum wage is perfectly illusory, or a convenient peg for the planter to hang a grievance on, but of no benefit to the coolie, who, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, will still find that the amount of wages he actually receives depends *upon* what it pleases the conscience of his employer to allow him.

It is obvious, indeed, that no check can be properly exercised when inspections, with every exertion on the part of Inspectors, can only be made on an average once a year, and gardens are generally situated in remote localities, where they are free for the remainder of the year from the exercise of official control over them. The inspecting staff is insufficient to do its work thoroughly, and many abuses must escape detection. The good management of a garden depends upon the manager, whose attitude is influenced by many considerations, and although the Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to say again, as he has so often said before, that in most tea gardens in Assam the coolies are well cared for and kindly treated, and Government interference is, therefore, unnecessary, there always remains a not inconsiderable residuum which needs constant supervision, and for which the standard of inspection is regrettably inadequate.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers.

54. Under this head there is this year nothing to report. Although there have been one or two cases of collision between planters and persons unconnected with the labour force they are not of sufficient importance to call for notice.

Colonisation of *ex*-tea-garden coolies.

55. The area of Government land settled direct with time-expired coolies in the province increased from 83,947 acres in 1899 to 89,597 acres in 1900. There is an increase in all districts, with the exception of Kamrup. In addition to land held directly under Government, coolies rent land from the gardens on which they are employed, and they also hold land as sub-tenants of raiyats or *mirasdars*.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

56. The receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1900-1901 are shown in Statement XII.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. J. MONAHAN,

Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Shillong,

The 8th August 1901.

STATEMENTS.

STATEMENTS.

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STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.	Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to column 10.	Percentage of column 10 to total labour force.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bengal. Chota Nagpur and Southal Parganas	38,968	35,639	74,607	50,177	54,307	104,484	89,145	89,946	179,091	50·22	43·67
Bengal. Behar	3,082	2,352	5,434	10,354	9,497	19,851	13,436	11,849	25,285	46·86	6·17
Bengal. Bengal Proper and Orissa ...	7,311	7,468	14,779	24,240	28,154	52,394	31,551	35,622	67,173	53·03	16·30
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	3,083	2,551	5,634	26,096	29,193	55,289	29,179	31,744	60,923	52·10	14·86
Central Provinces	12,584	11,256	23,840	14,877	15,376	30,253	27,461	26,632	54,093	49·23	13·19
Madras	2,694	1,859	4,553	4,064	4,321	8,385	6,758	6,180	12,938	47·76	3·50
Bombay	3	8	11	55	31	86	58	39	97	40·21	·21
Nepal	34	20	54	55	48	103	89	68	157	43·31	·04
Assam	934	591	1,525	5,881	2,932	8,813	6,815	3,523	10,338	34·07	2·52
Total of 1900	68,693	61,744	130,437	135,792	143,859	279,658	204,492	205,603	410,095	50·13	100·0
„ of 1899	69,450	62,447	131,897	129,038	134,498	263,536	198,488	196,945	395,433	49·80	100·0

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

	Chota Nagpur and Southal Parganas.			Behar.			Bengal Proper and Orissa.			North-Western Provinces and Oudh.			Central Provinces.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Imported by garden sardars	4,276	4,042	8,318	241	143	384	559	431	990	270	224	494	3,183	2,359	5,542
Imported by contractors ...	3,651	3,190	6,841	104	143	247	764	735	1,499	165	138	303	1,893	1,897	3,790
Total Act	7,927	7,232	15,159	345	286	631	1,323	1,166	2,489	435	362	797	5,076	4,256	9,332
Total non-Act ...	1,168	1,228	2,446	203	150	353	283	273	556	1,458	1,362	2,820	3,773	3,857	7,630
Total of 1900 ...	9,095	8,510	17,605	548	436	984	1,606	1,439	3,045	1,893	1,724	3,617	8,849	8,113	16,962
Total of 1899 ...	5,792	5,400	11,192	570	244	814	1,579	1,436	3,015	1,932	928	1,960	3,685	3,512	7,197

	Madras.			Bombay.			Nepal.			Assam.			Total.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Imported by garden sardars	550	403	953	...	...	...	29	18	47	...	...	...	9,108	7,620	16,728
Imported by contractors	370	191	561	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,947	6,294	13,241
Total Act	920	594	1,514	...	...	...	29	18	47	...	...	...	16,055	13,914	29,969
Total non-Act ...	641	594	1,235	...	...	...	3	...	3	32	...	32	7,561	7,514	15,075
Total of 1900 ...	1,561	1,188	2,749	...	...	...	32	18	50	32	...	32	23,616	21,428	45,044
Total of 1899 ...	925	707	1,632	1	...	1	1	1	2	59	...	59	13,644	12,228	25,872

STATEMENT IV.—Recruitment of Act labourers.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.	Number of certificates provided with thumb-mark examination of labourers.	Number of sardari coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under this Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts.			Number who contracted at Dhubri.
							Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	169	84	436	2·6	162	618	162	456	618	...
Sylhet	208*	50	580	2·7	257	837	257	580	837	...
Total Surma Valley	377	134	1,036	2·7	419	1,455	419	1,036	1,455	...
Kamrup	...	...	146	...	...	146	...	136	136	10
Darrang	874	626	4,155	4·8	3,324	7,479	2,639	2,961	5,600	1,879
Nowgong...	236	222	1,059	4·5	416	1,475	237	602	839	636
Sibsagar	1,540	1,299	5,181	3·3	1,660	6,841	1,331	4,744	5,475	1,366
Lakhimpur	1,216	971	5,131	4·2	2,422	12,553	5,547	4,213	9,760	2,793
Total Assam Valley ...	3,866	3,118	15,692	4·0	12,822	28,514	9,754	12,056	21,810	6,704
Total of 1900	4,243	3,252	16,728	3·9	13,241	29,969	10,173	13,092	23,265	6,704
,, 1899	5,411	4,132	7,571	1·4	11,065	18,636	7,915	6,036	13,071	5,565

* Exclusive of 9 certificates cancelled at the request of the managers.

STATEMENT V.—Debarkation Depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	Number who passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.		
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	2	6,910	6,003	4	54	121	5,824	...	1,030 0 0	3,215 3 2	4,245 3 2
Sylhet	7	11,289	11,810*	28	52	35	203	...	1,379 4 6	2,527 12 10	3,907 1 4
Kamrup	...	283	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2	11,388	10,007	1,554	144	353	3,266	...	1,475 6 6	2,619 10 7	4,095 1 1
Nowgong	1	2,519	2,495	406	31	274	1,782	1	489 0 0	560 9 9	1,049 9 9
Sibsagar	4	11,979	13,347†	1,510	179	402	7,498	...	1,132 15 0	2,952 15 1	4,085 14 1
Lakhimpur	1	18,395	18,317	2,626	179	...	14,623	...	555 4 3	1,602 11 5	2,157 15 8
Total of 1900 ...	17	62,733	62,015	6,128	639	1,185	33,196	1	6,061 14 3	13,478 14 10	19,540 13 1
,, 1899 ...	18	31,908	30,323	2,879	251	642	17,322	2	6,019 6 0	13,350 1 0	19,369 7 0

* Includes 5,734 coolies destined for Cachar district.
† ,, 1,410 ,, ,, ,, Lakhimpur ,,

STATEMENT VI.—Fraudulent and Irregular Recruitment.

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Goalpara (Dhubri) ...	3	42	17	9	19	...	45	75
Cachar ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet ...	9	...	...	...	9	...	9	9
Kamrup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	9	10	15	1	2	1	18	19
Nowgong ...	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	1
Sibsagar ...	4	12	8	3	4	1	15	28
Lakhimpur ...	4	59	25	16	6	6	57	85
Total of 1900 ...	29	124	66	29	50	8	145	217
„ 1899 ...	10	216	89	48	59	30	196	313

STATEMENT VII.—Repatriation of Labourers.

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated					
		Under section 11C. (11A).	Under section 142B (section 11B).	Under section 142C.	Under section 142D (11A, 11B).	Under section 142E.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	21	...	...	7	...	...	7
Sylhet	4	3	...	...	...	...	3
Kamrup	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	137	13	27	2	...	...	42
Nowgong	53	1	13	...	...	...	14
Sibsagar	100	23	31	1	...	1	56
Lakhimpur	192	47	71	...	...	...	118
Total of 1900	508	87	142	10	...	1	240
„ 1899	466	63(b)	231	3	...	5	306

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.						Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.		
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the district or in the garden.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 142C.	Under section 142E.	Total.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
							Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	14	...	...	...	14	288 0 0	...	288 0 0
Sylhet	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Darrang	...	94	...	1	...	95	125 6 0	...	125 6 0(a)
Nowgong	...	33	4	2	...	39	...	...	...
Sibsagar	4	38	2	...	...	44	20 0 0	...	20 0 0
Lakhimpur	...	72	...	2	...	74	79 7 0	...	79 7 0(c)
Total of 1900	4	253	6	5	...	268	512 13 0	...	512 13 0
„ 1899	...	152	6	2	...	160	55 10 0	...	55 10 0

(a) Rupees 42-1 was incurred in repatriating two coolies under section 142C.
(b) This includes one woman who was sent to district of recruitment to give evidence in her recruitment case.
(c) This represents expenditure for repatriations of labourers fraudulently recruited.

STATEMENT VIII.—Deaths among all classes of labourers.

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or ancylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar ...	Act	2,235	15	7	21	9	10	15	20	97	44·5
	Non-Act adults ...	77,868	209	323	475	399	84	262	399	2,151	27·5
	Children ...	48,769	127	152	171	110	85	105	247	997	20·3
	Total adults ...	80,103	224	330	496	408	94	277	419	2,248	27·9
Sylhet ...	Act	5,834	20	24	13	16	24	39	32	159	27·1
	Non-Act adults ...	81,531	116	211	310	304	158	268	669	2,036	24·8
	Children ...	60,050	34	134	137	360	58	83	359	1,165	19·3
	Total adults ...	87,365	136	235	323	320	182	298	701	2,195	25·1
Kamrup ...	Act	492	...	3	6	8	2	3	8	30	61·0
	Not-Act adults ...	1,997	13	3	18	13	1	5	12	65	32·5
	Children ...	1,097	...	1	2	17	...	1	4	25	22·7
	Total adults ...	2,489	13	6	24	21	3	8	20	95	38·1
Darrang ...	Act	26,228	196	109	278	94	243	170	208	1,298	49·4
	Non-Act adults ...	23,084	180	41	86	92	116	32	123	670	26·7
	Children ...	26,724	30	25	101	115	94	85	313	763	28·5
	Total adults ...	51,312	376	150	364	186	359	202	331	1,968	38·4
Nowgong ...	Act	6,695	17	19	38	78	42	33	53	300	44·7
	Non-Act adults ...	7,126	21	10	26	72	17	24	57	227	31·7
	Children ...	6,808	6	12	24	84	4	6	45	181	26·5
	Total adults ...	13,821	38	29	84	150	59	57	110	527	37·9
Sibsagar ...	Act	41,496	177	200	368	109	156	297	396	1,703	41·0
	Non-Act adults ...	49,524	119	151	200	101	73	184	433	1,261	25·4
	Children ...	39,973	75	149	363	310	36	195	329	1,457	27·5
	Total adults ...	91,020	296	351	568	210	229	481	829	2,964	32·5
Lakhimpur ...	Act	50,415	210	207	526	178	387	294	426	2,228	44·1
	Non-Act adults ...	38,701	105	86	191	87	149	158	221	997	25·7
	Children ...	46,242	84	127	386	269	118	148	461	1,593	34·3
	Total adults ...	89,116	315	293	717	265	536	452	647	3,225	36·1
Grand total ...	Act	133,398	635	569	1,270	492	864	842	1,143	5,815	43·5
	Non-Act adults ...	281,933	763	825	1,306	1,068	598	933	1,914	7,497	26·2
	Children ...	249,665	356	600	1,184	1,265	395	623	1,958	6,381	25·4
	Total adults ...	415,231	1,398	1,394	2,576	1,560	1,462	1,775	3,057	13,222	31·7
	Total labour force ...	664,897	1,754	1,994	3,760	2,825	1,857	2,398	5,015	19,603	29·4

STATEMENT XII.—*Showing the Receipts and Disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year* 1900-1901.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
MEDICAL.							
Contractors' license fees under section 13	1,021 0 0	200 0 0	1,221 0 0	Salaries of depôt establishments, including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, allowances to Hospital Assistants, compounders, and dressers, clerks, servants, travelling allowance, and compensation for dearness of provisions	12,289 4 6	3,894 7 7	16,183 12 1
Recruiters' license fees under section 24	...	273 0 0	273 0 0				
Registration fees under sections 35 and 61 ...	...	11,661 0 0	11,661 0 0	Supplies and services, including expenses during the prevalence of epidemics and miscellaneous under grants for medical purposes and diet of patients, clothing, and bedding, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty contributions and repairs, postage charges, telegrams, purchase and repairs of furniture, tents, rates, and taxes, and miscellaneous under hospitals and dispensaries	17,001 12 10	3,246 1 6	20,248 14 4
Rates under section 103 ...	65,091 9 6	...	65,091 9 6				
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	5,877 3 4	...	5,877 3 4	Contingent charges—			
Fees for labour under sections 112 and 112B	5,378 0 0	...	5,378 0 0	Grants to dispensaries...	4,760 0 0	...	4,760 0 0
Medical examination fees ...	240 0 0	...	240 0 0	Salaries under 26.—Scientific, etc., including Inspectors, Travelling Inspectors of Immigrants, Embarkation Agents and Assistant Surgeons	6,644 14 6	18,077 6 9	24,922 4 3
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	2,102 3 9	...	2,102 3 9	Clerks and servants ...	10,172 3 7	5,870 7 6	16,042 11 1
Fines and miscellaneous ...	1,392 2 2	...	1,392 2 2	Travelling allowance ...	...	2,031 10 9	2,031 10 9
Diet, etc., charges recovered	4,159 4 11	...	4,159 4 11	Compensation for dearness of provisions	9,231 12 7	...	9,231 12 7
Fees for license of emigrant vessels under section 90 ...	...	1,216 0 0	1,216 0 0	House rent allowance ...	246 15 11	9 11 0	256 10 11
Capitation fees ...	...	2,424 2 0	2,424 2 0	Fees to Medical Officers for inspecting tea gardens ...	4,074 13 0	...	4,074 13 0
Miscellaneous ...	...	261 10 9	261 10 9	Miscellaneous, including medical examination charges, postage, telegrams, printing and stationery, share of cost of controlling and account offices, and miscellaneous under "Contingencies" (as—Secretaries, etc.), printing at Private Press under 30.—Stationery, and burial charges of pauper, charges of relief of distress, cost of repatriating invalided labourers, and petty construction and repairs under 32.—Miscellaneous, etc.	7,345 14 8	3,190 10 1	10,536 8 9
Advances ...	648 11 6	...	648 11 6				
				Advances ...	674 9 0	...	674 9 0
				Deficiency (being excess of payment over receipts transferred from Bengal)	20,372 9 10	20,372 9 10	...
Total	85,910 3 3	16,037 12 9	1,01,917 15 12	Total	92,507 0 9	16,037 12 9	1,08,544 13 7
Opening balance	1,05,017 10 4	...	1,05,017 10 4	Closing balance ...	97,450 13 4	...	97,450 13 4
Grand total	1,90,927 13 7	16,037 12 9	2,06,965 10 4	Grand total ...	1,90,957 13 6	16,037 12 9	2,06,995 10 4

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by tea-planters and garden coolies.

Districts.	Subdivisions.	Non-fulfilment of engagement under Act XIII of 1859.			Absence or desertion under Act I of 1882.		Cruelty under Act I of 1882.		Enticing coolies, Act V of 1901.		Cohabitation, assault, or contempt of procedure in connection with a breach of agreement or entry on the garden.		Other offences by planters against coolies.		Unlawful restraint or hiding by planters.			Assaults or insults by coolies on or in defence of their servants.		Thefts or breaches of duty by coolies.	
		Number of cases.		Number of coolies concerned in cases.	Number of cases.		Number of cases.		Number of cases.		Number of cases.		Number of cases.		Number of cases.		Number of coolies concerned in cases.	Number of cases.		Number of coolies concerned in cases.	
		Complainants.	Convictions.		Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.		Complainants.	Convictions.	Complainants.	Convictions.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Cachar	Sadr				4	4															
	Hailakandi																				
Sylhet	North Sylhet																				
	Karimganj																				
	South Sylhet																				
	Habiganj																				
Kamrup																					
Darrang	Sadr				4	10															
Nowgong	Mangaldai																				
Sibsagar	Sadr				3	14															
	Sadr																				
	Jorhat																				
Lakhimpur	Golaghat																				
	Sadr																				
	North Lakhimpur																				
	Total of 1900	430	130	38	304	323	69	9	42	33	26	3	10	4	31	31	198	22	17	197	189
	" 1899	449	149	34	301	307	48	34	13	9	17	3	10	3	11	11	174	9	9	39	38

* Excluding figures for Lakhimpur district.

† One hundred and eighty-seven cases under Act I of 1882, in which 309 coolies were concerned in Lakhimpur (vide final note to paragraph 24 of report) have been excluded under this head.

STATEMENT X.—Desertion among adults.

Districts.	Population.			Percentage of desertion among			Number of deserters from the gardens of non-residents.	Number arrested.					Number convicted.	Number sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men adults.	Women adults & children.	Total adult & children.		By warrant.	By contingent.	By police.	By absconders.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	118	8,034	8,152	5·08	3·85	4·38	—	—	—	4	—	4	4	—
Sylhet	338	4,168	4,506	4·23	2·68	3·11	24	11	10	3	—	24	11	11
Kamrup	91	848	939	3·30	2·11	2·45	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Darrang	232	1,992	2,224	3·03	1·96	2·29	18	9	—	15	1	25	25	25
Nowgong	251	365	616	3·19	1·96	2·43	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sibsagar	1,136	1,339	2,475	3·73	2·68	3·16	67	45	—	45	1	91	91	91
Lakhimpur	1,424	1,715	3,139	2·88	1·59	2·14	107	45	139	—	14	198	182	182
Total of 1900	3,590	18,461	22,051	3·55	2·50	2·86	225	125	155	—	14	362	313	294
" 1899	4,[illegible]	10,[illegible]	14,[illegible]	3·[illegible]	2·[illegible]	2·[illegible]	433	133	181	29	22	415	333	313

* Six were back in garden.

STATEMENT XI.—Inspections.

Districts.	Number of gardens existing last quinquennium.	Number of new tea gardens established since date of last return.	Total number of gardens liable to inspection.	Number inspected once.	Number inspected twice.	Number inspected thrice.	Number inspected four times.	Total inspections.	Number of inspections made by Deputy Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Local Surgeons.	Number of inspections made by other agencies.	Total number of inspections made.	Number of gardens which remained unvisited.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	22	10	34	16	4	—	—	16	5	11	5	5	26	8
Sylhet	86	4	90	14	4	—	—	18	1	12	1	4	18	12
Kamrup	6	—	6	2	2	—	—	4	—	1	—	—	1	2
Darrang	11	1	12	9	1	1	—	11	—	11	—	—	11	1
Nowgong	14	—	14	8	3	—	—	14	—	12	—	2	14	3
Sibsagar	132	6	138	102	18	—	—	137	2	38	2	2	44	13
Lakhimpur	119	2	121	111	10	—	—	131	1	34	2	2	39	13
Total of 1900	338	24	324	262	42	1	—	332	8	119	10	15	152	52
" 1899	347	22	369	283	38	4	—	349	3	113	10	11	137	36

* Included two inspections of a garden not shown in inspections. † This includes 18 inspections of four investigations of gardens and 18 cooly encounters, new arrivals, sick and invalids, etc.

STATEMENT XII.—Showing the Receipts and Disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1900-1901.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
MEDICAL.							
Contractors' license fees under section 13	1,021 0 0	200 0 0	1,221 0 0	Salaries of dept't establishments, including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, allowances to Hospital Assistants, compounders, and dressers, clerks, servants, travelling allowance, and compensation for dearness of provisions	12,289 5 6	3,894 7 7	16,183 13 1
Recruiters' license fees under section 24	...	272 0 0	272 0 0				
Registration fees under sections 35 and 36 ...	...	11,664 0 0	11,664 0 0	Supplies and services, including expenses during the prevalence of epidemics and miscellaneous under grants for medical purposes and diet of patients, clothing, and bedding, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty constructions and repairs, postage charges, telegrams, purchase and repairs of furniture, rents, rates, and taxes, and miscellaneous under hospitals and dispensaries	17,702 13 10	2,246 1 6	20,948 14 4
Rates under section 103 ...	65,091 9 6	...	65,091 9 6				
Fees for use of dead-fall depôts ...	5,877 3 4	...	5,877 3 4				
Fees for labour under sections 112 and 112B	5,318 0 0	..	5,318 0 0	Contingent charges—			
Medical examination fees ...	240 0 0	...	240 0 0	Grants to dispensaries...	4,760 0 0	...	4,760 0 0
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	2,109 3 9	..	2,109 3 9	Salaries under 26.—Scientific, etc., including Inspection, Travelling Inspectors of Immigrants, Emigration Agents, and Assistant Surgeons	6,541 14 6	17,073 6 3	24,932 4 9
Fines and miscellaneous ...	1,392 2 2	...	1,392 2 2	Clerks and servants ...	10,172 3 7	5,870 7 6	16,042 11 1
Diet, etc., charges recovered	4,159 4 11	...	4,159 4 11	Travelling allowance ...	...	2,031 10 9	2,031 10 9
				Compensation for dearness of provisions	9,121 12 7	...	9,121 12 7
				House rent allowance ...	246 13 11	9 11 0	256 10 11
Fees for license of conveyance vessels under section 90 ...	...	1,216 0 0	1,216 0 0	Fees to Medical Officers for inspecting tea gardens ...	4,074 13 0	...	4,074 13 0
Capitation fees	...	2,674 2 0	2,674 2 0	Miscellaneous, including medical examination charges, postage, telegrams, printing and stationery, share of cost of controlling and account officers, and miscellaneous under "Contingencies" [26.—Scientific, etc.], printing at Private Press under 30.—Stationery, and burial charges of pauper, charges of relief of distress, cost of repatriating invalided labourers, and petty construction and repairs under 32.—Miscellaneous, etc.	3,345 14 8	3,190 10 1	10,536 8 9
Miscellaneous	...	261 10 9	261 10 9				
Advances	628 11 6	...	628 11 6	Advances	674 9 9	...	674 9 9
				Deficiency (i.e., excess of payment over receipts transferred from Bengal)	20,172 9 10	20,172 9 10	
Total	53,910 1 2	16,037 13 9	1,01,947 15 11	Total	93,597 0 2	16,037 12 9	2,09,544 12 11
Opening balance	1,20,047 12 4	...	1,20,047 12 4	Closing balance ...	81,450 13 4	...	81,450 13 4
Grand Total	1,73,957 13 6	16,037 13 9	2,1,0,995 10 3	Grand total	1,75,047 13 6	16,037 12 9	2,06,995 10 3

SHILLONG: Printed and published by CONYNGHAM FRANCIS, Press Superintendent, Assam, at the Secretariat Printing Office—(Rev.) No. 163—300—9-8-1901.

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR

1901.

SHILLONG:

PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.

1902.

Price 1s. 6d.] [*Price One Rupee.*

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PRINTED BY CONYNGHAM BRANCIS, PRESS SUPERINTENDENT, ASSAM.

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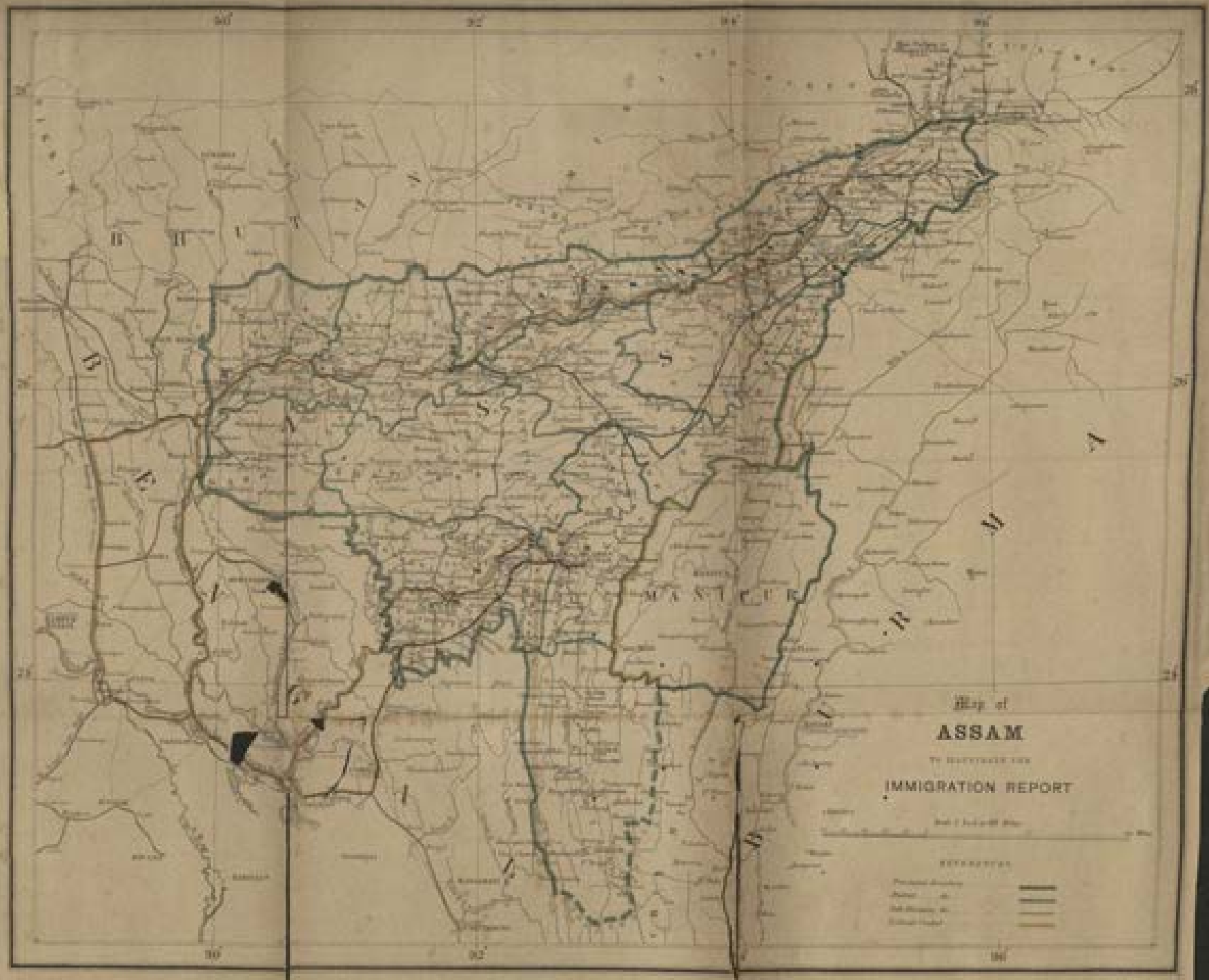
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ASSAM
IMMIGRATION REPORT

REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 1901.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

THE present report deals only with labour imported for employment on tea gardens, in the oil refinery at Margherita, in coal-mines, and in a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. It is not concerned with the large labour force employed by the Assam-Bengal Railway, or with the labourers who each autumn find their way into the province for temporary employ and who generally return to their homes in April and May.

Introduction of the new Act and main changes in the law.

2. Act I of 1882 was in force during a part of the year, but was repealed by the new Assam Labour and Emigration Act, VI of 1901, which came into force on the 9th March 1901. The new Act was designed to cheapen the cost of importing tea garden labour, and to safeguard coolies against fraudulent or oppressive recruitment by bringing under some control the operations of *all* recruiters, whether working under the special Labour Law or not, and by encouraging the employment of garden sardars as the recruiting agency, instead of contractors. In the case of contracts executed on or after the 1st April 1903, there will be an increase of eight annas in the monthly wage during the second and third years of the labourer's employ. Special provision has also been made for new coolies, who will now receive full wages for the performance of half tasks during the first six months of their residence on the garden, unless certified by an Inspector to be physically fit to perform a full task. The Local Government has been empowered to direct the cancellation of labour contracts of labourers on any estate where their condition appears to be unsatisfactory, in consequence of the insufficiency of their earnings to maintain them in health and comfort. The provisions of the Emigrants' Health Act, I (B.C.) of 1889, have been incorporated in the new Act.

Statistics of labour force.

3. Statement I shows that the labour force, Act and non-Act, included 644,758 persons at the end of 1901. The number of additions was considerably less than in 1900, while the deductions were greater, the net result being a decrease of 17,713, or 2·6 per cent. The decrease is exhibited by all districts of the province, except Kamrup and Lakhimpur, and the increase in these two districts is very small.

The number of Act labourers fell from 130,437 to 108,861, all districts sharing in this decrease. Importation added only half as many persons as during the preceding year, and there is a growing tendency to use Act XIII instead of the special Labour Act as the basis for local renewals of contract.

There was a slight increase in the total number of non-Act labourers, their number at the close of the year being 535,897, as against 532,034 at the close of 1900. In the province, as a whole, the number of non-Act adults increased from 279,658 to 289,521, but there was a considerable decrease in Cachar, due to the large number of coolies who left the tea gardens with or without permission. The number of children decreased by 6,000, a result which is explained by a striking reduction in the number of children imported.

Distribution of the labour force.

4. Of the total labour force of the province, 40·84 per cent. is employed in the Surma Valley and 59·16 in the Assam Valley. With the decrease in the number of Act labourers and the increase among non-Act labourers, the percentage of Act population to the total labour force fell from 20·06 to 16·8. In the Surma Valley the Act is falling more and more into disuse, and only 2·9 per cent. of the total Act force was employed in this Valley.

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

5. The nationality and sex of the adults are shown in Statement II. Of late years importation from the Central Provinces has been largely on the increase, but the majority of the labourers still owe their origin to Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. In sex, they are almost equally divided, the percentage of females to the total number of adults being 50·79. Among Act labourers men preponderate, while in the non-Act population the number of women is somewhat in excess. Children form 38·21 per cent. of the total labour force.

Labour force and acreage under tea.

6. The area under tea cultivation increased from 337,327 acres to 338,186 acres. With the diminished labour force, however, the number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea fell to 119, as against 123 in the preceding year.

The Surma Valley average (122) of labourers per 100 acres is still somewhat in excess of that in the Assam Valley (117).

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

Provincial figures of immigration.

7. The following statement gives particulars of all classes of coolies imported into the province for labour on tea and other estates during the past five years :

Class of labourers.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act ... Sardari adults ...	22,490	12,080	7,571	16,728	8,102
Act ... Contractors' adults...	18,127	10,559	11,065	13,241	6,147
Non-Act adults	25,711	12,877	7,236	15,075	5,638
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	66,328	35,516	25,872	45,044	19,887
Children	29,603	13,653	6,036	17,689	6,336
Grand total	95,931	49,169	31,908	62,733	26,223

The decrease in immigration is very striking. During 1900 recruitment was promoted by the existence of famine conditions in the recruiting districts, but its contraction in 1901 is not altogether due to a return of prosperity in the Central Provinces and the hill tracts of Bengal. The present depressed state of the tea industry must have discouraged the importation of fresh labour. The low prices obtained for tea in recent years, the result of over-production, has necessitated economy in the importation of coolies as well as in other directions. The opening out of new gardens and the extension of existing gardens have to a certain extent ceased, and the necessity for the importation of large numbers of new coolies for this purpose no longer exists. The decrease in importation may also be attributed to the more stringent provisions of the new Labour Act, which oblige recruiters to register coolies in their districts before withdrawing them. These new provisions did not come into force until the expiry of a considerable portion of the season to which this report relates, but from a report submitted by the Secretaries of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association, it appears that recruiting during the season ending 31st March 1902 fell off by nearly 50 per cent., the number of importations during 1901-1902 being 11,227, against 21,513 in the previous season. There is, moreover, a remarkable decrease in the proportion of *arkati* coolies imported, for, while coolies of this class imported in the season 1900-1901 numbered 6,217, or slightly less than one-third of the total number imported, such coolies imported in 1901-1902 numbered only 1,644, or one-seventh of the total number of importations.

Statement III.—Nationality and sex of adult immigrants and agency by which recruited.

8. The Central Provinces and the hill districts of Bengal subscribed, in almost equal proportions, 72 per cent. of the total number of adults imported. Women were rather more numerous than men, an unexpected and rather curious circumstance.

Statement IV.—Recruitment of Act labourers by sardars and contractors.

9. Of 14,249 Act coolies imported during the calendar year 1901, 8,102 were engaged by *sardars* and 6,147 by contractors (*arkatis*), these proportions being very similar to those of the previous year. The average number of recruits per sardar was 1·8, against 3·9 in 1900 and 1·4 in 1899. The number of certificates granted to sardars was slightly higher than that of 1900, 4,349, as against 4,243. There was a decrease in the number of certificates granted to sardars in all districts except Kamrup and Lakhimpur. In Lakhimpur the demand for coolies is always greater than the supply, and 1,966 certificates were granted in 1901, as against 1,216 in the previous year. Managers in this district anticipated that there would be more difficulty in recruiting coolies under Act VI of 1901 than there was under Act I of 1882, and, therefore, sent down more sardars as recruiters. The results were disappointing.

Taking all districts together, the percentage of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers was slightly higher than that of the previous year. This indicates that planters are becoming more keenly alive to the importance of this safeguard against the importation of unsuitable labour. But complaints are made that the medical reports are not always reliable. Under the new Act the registration and

execution of contracts at Dhubri ceased with effect from the 1st April 1901. During the first three months of the year, 1,447 contracts to labour in the Assam Valley were executed at this place.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

10. The number of deaths which occurred among all classes of immigrants during transit between the port of embarkation and their destination in the Assam Valley is given below:

	Number of deaths		
	From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
1	2	3	4
On board the steamer. { Between Goalundo and Dhubri ...	7	2	9
On board the steamer. { Between Dhubri and Dibrugarh ...	16	1	17
At Dhubri	3	1	4
„ Gauhati	...	...	...
„ Tezpur	8	...	8
„ Rangamatighat	...	1	1
„ Silghat	1	3	4
„ Nigriting	6	...	6
„ Kokilamukh	1	10	11
„ Desangmukh	1	...	1
„ Kamalabari	...	...	...
„ Dibrugarh	5	3	8
Total of 1901	48	21	69
„ „ 1900	528	66	594
„ „ 1899	72	18	90

These figures indicate most satisfactory improvement. There was very little cholera on the mail steamers during the year.

Transit of immigrants in the Surma Valley.

11. In the Surma Valley, the Assam-Bengal Railway is now being largely used for the conveyance of coolies to tea gardens. In Sylhet, of 2,947 immigrants, only 803 made use of the river depôts, the remainder having passed through the district by means of the railway, while of a total number of 2,512 coolies imported into the district of Cachar, 1,536 coolies were imported by railway and 976 by steamer.

In this area also the mortality among coolies in transit shows a considerable decrease, there having been no deaths *en route*, and only 2 deaths at the river depôts, against 26 and 42, respectively, in 1900.

Statement V.—Debarkation depôts.

12. A debarkation depôt was opened from the 1st November 1901 at Gauhati, but has remained unused, as no coolies have as yet been sent up to Nowgong, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur by train. The line will probably be put to more use for this purpose when through communication is open to Dibrugarh. The proportion of coolies who passed through the depôts in 1901 was 95·7 per cent. of the total number of immigrants, as against 98·8 per cent. in 1900. The number of detentions for want of a guide was particularly large in Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur. The large number of detentions in Darrang is due to the fact that the gardens of the Mangaldai subdivision are all at a considerable distance from the depôt at Rangamati ghât, and coolies have often to be detained until sardars arrive to conduct them to the garden. Coolies for the North Lakhimpur subdivision pass through the Kokilamukh depôt of the Sibsagar district, and this accounts for the large number of detentions in this district. In Lakhimpur, the large number of detentions is due to the fact that the river steamers were unable to come up to the main ghât and coolies had to travel a considerable distance before reaching the depôt. But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that removals might have been more speedily effected.

Statement VI.—Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

13. The number of complaints of fraud or irregularity in recruitment fell from 124 to 63, a decrease which *must* be attributed partly, if not mainly, to the decrease in the number of importations. They were in all cases carefully enquired into.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

14. The number of contracts made in 1901, as compared with the preceding year, is given below:

Number of contracts made.

	1900.	1901.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
In the actual labour districts under section 118 of the Act	8,223	6,855	—16·63
In the actual labour districts under section 121 of the Act	15,738	17,597	+11·81
At Dhubri under section 112A of Act I of 1882	6,432	1,447	—77·50
In the recruiting districts	23,265	12,802	—44·97
Contracts executed under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code	2,364	931	—60·61
Total	36,022	39,632	—29·25

Contracts were executed at Dhubri under section 112A of Act I of 1882 only for a period of three months, *i.e.*, January to March 1901, after which Act VI of 1901 came into force.

There was, generally, an increased use of the Labour Act as a basis for local contracts. But a contrary tendency is manifesting itself in some portions of the Assam Valley—the Golaghat and Jorhat subdivisions and the Darrang district—where Act XIII is gaining in favour upon the more elaborate enactment which has been specially designed for Assam. In Sylhet and Cachar the Labour Act has practically fallen into disuse as a basis for local contract. The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, remarks that Act VI of 1901 is not in favour with the planters of that district, and he is of opinion that there would be no serious objection to its abolition. In Cachar, Act XIII of 1859 has for some time been preferred by managers as sufficient for all the requirements of local contracting.

15. The total number of contracts executed under section 118, which required verification by an Inspector, and the total number of contracts verified, are given in the margin. The results show a considerable improvement, as compared with the previous year, the percentage of contracts verified having risen from 74·05 to 87·5. The number of contracts left unverified were for the most part executed after the date on which the garden was inspected, and shortly before the close of the year.

Verification of contracts.

District.	Total for verification.	Total verified.
Cachar	...	...
Sylhet ...	10	10
Kamrup ...	...	...
Darrang ...	1,826	1,625
Nowgong ...	377	270
Sibsagar ...	2,520	2,271
Lakhimpur ...	3,789	3,284
Total ...	8,522	7,460

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.—See Statement I.

16. All Deputy Commissioners report that there was a considerable improvement in reporting the determination of contracts.

The number of contracts cancelled under section 10 fell from 93 to 36, of which 14 were contracts of women who had come to the province unaccompanied by husband or guardian. Of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled, 34 were repatriated.

Three hundred and fifty-nine contracts were cancelled under section 131 of the Act on account of permanent incapacity to labour, against 404 in 1900. Of the contracts cancelled on this ground, 259 were those of contractors' coolies and 95 of sardari coolies. The contracts of 122 newly-imported coolies were cancelled under section 131.

In Sibsagar, the contracts of 4 coolies were cancelled by the Civil Surgeon, at the request of a manager, under section 156 of Act VI of 1901.

17. Twenty contracts were redeemed—3 in Darrang, 9 in Sibsagar, and 8 in Lakhimpur. In 1900, 24 contracts were redeemed and in 1899 10.

18. The number of contracts dissolved by mutual consent during 1901 was 2,175, against 2,533 in 1900. There was a considerable decrease in the number of contracts so cancelled in Sibsagar, but in Darrang, the number rose from 157 to 443 owing to the cancellation of 341 contracts on one tea estate in the Mangaldai subdivision. The explanation given by the manager of this curious circumstance is that he does better by

relying upon voluntary than upon penal labour: no contractor's coolies have been imported for some years past: a good deal of cultivation is held by the labourers' families, and it is the custom on the garden for the coolies only to work when required. A special enquiry is being made into the case.

19. In Cachar, 17 contracts were cancelled under section 200, the labourers concerned having actually suffered imprisonment for terms amounting in the whole to six months for desertion. The contracts of ten coolies of the Nonoi tea estate in Nowgong were cancelled, under section 152 (1) (*d*), on account of the ill treatment to which they had been subjected, compensation being at the same time paid to each of them.

20. Act VI of 1901 contains a new provision (section 153) which empowers the Local Government to direct the cancellation of labour contracts in cases where the condition of the labourers appears to be unsatisfactory in consequence of the insufficiency of their earnings to maintain them in health and comfort. The provisions of this section have not as yet been put into force, as it has been decided that they do not apply to contracts which were executed before the amendment of the law. The question was raised in the case of the Latabari garden of the Sibsagar district, the management of which had, in the opinion of the inspecting officer, rendered itself liable to this special penalty, and orders were actually issued for the cancellation of contracts, which were subsequently withdrawn.

21. The provisions of sections 130 and 192 of the Act, by which periods of absence through sickness for more than 30 days and of absence from work without reasonable cause are added to the terms of contracts, are rarely resorted to by employers. Cases occurred in three districts only, *viz.*, Cachar, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur, and of these, the number in Cachar and Lakhimpur was wholly insignificant. In Sibsagar, there were 120 endorsements extending the term of contracts on account of absence from work.

Statement VII.—Repatriation of labourers.

22. It is interesting to note that of 457 coolies who were offered repatriation, 167 preferred to remain on the garden or in the labour district, only 286 electing to be sent to their homes.

Wages.

23. The following figures, which profess to show the average monthly wage earnings of Act coolies, have been abstracted from the monthly wage returns which were rendered by planters during the last six months of the year:

Subdivision.	Average monthly cash wage, including allowances paid under sections 128(1) and 130(1), value of diet in lieu of such allwoances and of rations provided under section 134(2), and also including *tiora* earnings.		Monthly average of payments made as bonus.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar sadr	4 14 7	4 1 1	0 0 11	0 0 11
Hailakandi	4 11 4	3 13 11	...	...
North Sylhet	4 7 2	3 4 2	...	...
Karimganj	4 6 0	3 7 3	0 0 2	0 0 2
South Sylhet	4 8 5	3 6 2	0 0 3	0 0 5
Habiganj	5 2 8	4 1 2	0 0 2	...
Kamrup	4 14 0	3 10 1	0 0 5	0 0 4
Darrang sadr	4 10 7	4 2 9	0 2 6	0 1 9
Mangaldai	4 15 0	3 15 10	0 1 7	0 1 2
Nowgong	5 1 8	4 7 9	0 4 9	0 2 9
Sibsagar sadr	5 1 8	3 15 2	0 10 7	0 6 10
Jorhat	4 7 3	3 15 0	0 4 3	0 1 7
Golaghat	4 12 2	3 13 1	0 1 7	0 0 8
Lakhimpur sadr	5 12 6	4 9 3	0 5 6	0 4 5
North Lakhimpur... ...	5 3 7	4 1 10	0 6 1	0 4 7
Average*	5 3 1	4 3 8	0 5 3	0 3 8

* The provincial averages are not the means of the district averages, but are calculated independently by dividing the average amount paid monthly to Act labourers throughout the province during the last six months of the year by the average number of Act labourers in employ each month. The Provincial average is raised by the large proportion of labourers employed in the Lakhimpur district on higher wages than the ordinary.

These figures are reported to have been obtained by simply dividing the amount of the monthly wages bill by the number of coolies on the garden labour force. They

represent, thus, the roughest possible average, in calculating which no allowance is made for short payments due to idleness, absence, or sickness. There are curious differences between the subdivisional averages, due possibly to the amount of local labour available to compete with imported coolie labour, or to the accessibility of the locality from Bengal. The lowest rates are in Sylhet, the only densely populated district in the province, and the one most easily reached by immigrants. But the Habiganj subdivision of this district shows a much higher average than any of the other three. As might be expected, wages are highest in the sparsely populated and remote district of Lakhimpur. They are almost as high in Nowgong and in the sadr subdivision of the Sibsagar district, but are at a remarkably lower level in the other two subdivisions. The averages are higher than those which were published for the preceding year. But they have been arrived at by a different process, and a comparison of the two sets of figures would be infructuous.

Wages of non-Act labourers.

24. In prescribing the revised monthly wage statement for Act labourers, the Chief Commissioner abolished the statement showing the average wages earned by non-Act labourers, and directed that Inspectors of Labourers should ascertain and report merely the rate of wage at which such labourers were employed. A comparison of the actual average monthly wages earned by non-Act labourers with that earned by Act labourers is not, therefore, possible. The Secretary of State having, however, expressed a desire that the statistics should refer to non-Act as well as to Act labour, the wage return has, since the close of the year, been expanded so as to show monthly averages for both classes of coolies and to afford a basis for comparing their earnings.

Non-Act labourers consist generally of coolies whose agreements under the Act have expired, and who remain on the garden on contracts under Act XIII of 1859 or as free labourers. These coolies are employed on the same kind of work as Act labourers, and the tasks are also similar. Coolies giving an agreement under Act XIII receive a bonus, the fair rate of which is Rs. 12 for a man, and Rs. 10 for a woman for each year of engagement. Their monthly rate of pay is generally the same as that of Act labourers in the first three years of their contract, *viz.*, Rs. 5 for men and Rs. 4 for women, while children are employed at a monthly rate of wage varying from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 4 according to age. Non-Act labourers, however, are able to earn more by *ticca* work than Act labourers, and accordingly enjoy a higher average pay. Many of them, by the time their contracts under the Act expired, have managed to acquire a piece of land, and, as non-Act labourers, they are generally allowed a considerable amount of leave to cultivate this land. Non-Act coolies, too, are generally employed in the well-paid posts on the garden, as sardars, carpenters, chaukidars, etc., and may earn very high pay, amounting in some cases to Rs. 15 per month. The average daily rate of wage paid to free labourers differs in different districts and on different gardens, and ranges from 3 to 5 annas for men and from 2 annas 9 pies to 3 annas 6 pies for women. In the Brahmaputra Valley, Kacharis from the lower districts visit the upper districts to work on tea gardens during the greater part of the cold weather. These labourers generally make it a condition of their employ that they shall be allowed to earn *ticca* and manage to earn as much as Rs. 10 a month or even more.

Working of section 5 of the Act.

25. Special provision has been made in Act VI of 1901 for new coolies, who will now receive full wages for the performance of half tasks during the first six months of their residence on the garden, unless they are certified to be physically fit to perform a full task. This provision seems to have been generally understood, and there has been very little tendency on the part of managers to bring forward coolies to be certified as fit to perform full tasks. It has been in fact the custom on many gardens for some time past to give full pay to new coolies for some time after their arrival on the garden. Only 72 newly-arrived coolies were certified by Inspectors to be physically fit to perform full tasks, and of these certificates, 62 were granted in Darrang alone.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

26. The birth-rate upon gardens shows a satisfactory increase and stands at 29·1 per mille of total and 93·2 per mille of adult female population. More careful registration is generally given as the cause of the rise. But the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, advances the opinion that the practice of procuring abortion is not nearly so prevalent as it used to be.

Birth-rate.—See Statement I, column 35.

The birth-rate among tea-garden coolies remains materially lower than the provincial birth-rate, which was 33·98 per thousand on the total population and 101·8 on the total adult female population.

27. The death-rate fell substantially and was no more than 25·8 per mille of the whole labour force. The year was a healthy one, and the fact that there were fewer importations of new coolies, especially contractors' coolies, naturally exercised a favourable influence on the health of the labour force. At the same time there can be little doubt that the improved health should be in part ascribed to the care which was taken to ensure that sanitary regulations were properly enforced.

Death-rate for the year.—See Statement I, column 34.

28. The statement in the margin illustrates the mortality among adult tea-garden coolies according to nationality. The improvement in the death-rate of coolies from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and the Central Provinces still continues, the annual mortality among the former class having diminished from 31·4 to 28·15, and among the latter from 48·3 to 44·37 per mille. There was a slight increase in the rate of mortality amongst labourers from Bengal Proper and Orissa and Madras. The death-rate of Assamese labourers also shows a slight increase, but is still very low.

Mortality according to nationality.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	Deaths among adults of both classes.	Ratio per mille of deaths to strength.
1	2	3	4	5
Bengal — Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	177,092	2,315	27·04
	Women...		2,475	
Bengal — Behar	Men ...	23,989	233	18·17
	Women...		203	
Bengal — Bengal Proper and Orissa.	Men ...	65,790	806	26·34
	Women...		927	
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.	Men ...	58,737	819	28·15
	Women...		835	
Central Provinces	Men ...	55,620	1,917	44·37
	Women...		1,251	
Madras	Men ...	12,492	220	35·46
	Women...		223	
Assam	Men ...	10,281	68	12·25
	Women...		58	
Total	Men ...	200,088	5,678	28·37
	Women...	204,150	5,972	29·25
Grand total	...	404,238	11,650	28·81

N.B.—Annual strength from Bombay and Nepal are included in the total, but are not shown separately, as the total number of such coolies is small. No deaths occurred amongst such coolies.

29. The death-rate amongst Act labourers was considerably higher than that of the labour force as a whole, being 37·2 per mille. But this represents a great improvement on the conditions of the preceding year when the rate was as high as 43·5 per mille. Mortality decreased in all districts except Cachar and Kamrup. In Cachar the ratio rose from 44·5 to 60·3, a large number of deaths being due to diarrhœa and dysentery. In Kamrup the ratio rose from 61 to 78·9, due to an outbreak of cholera on the Barduar tea estate in that district. The number of Act coolies in these two districts is, however, very small, and offers no fair basis for calculating a rate.

Statement No. VIII.—Death-rate and causes of death among Act labourers.

The marginal statement compares the mean strength of the total Act labour force and the number of deaths from different diseases in 1900 and 1901. The figures show a considerable decrease in the number of deaths from cholera, diarrhœa, and dysentery. The death-rate among Act labourers from the effects of malarial poisoning shows a slight increase, and this feature is also observable in the mortality statistics of the province. The year 1901 was distinctly more malarious than 1900, and the provincial death-rate from malarial fever rose from 14·70 to 15·86 per mille.

	1900.	1901.
Mean strength	133,398	119,649
Deaths from—		
Cholera ...	635	394
Diarrhœa ...	569	425
Dysentery ...	1,270	963
Malarial fever ...	492	443
Anæmia ...	864	547
Respiratory diseases.	842	675
Other causes ...	1,143	1,007
Total ...	5,815	4,454

Deaths among non-Act labourers.

30. The death-rate among non-Act adults (25·2 per thousand) shows a slight improvement as compared with the rate for 1900 (26·2). In Nowgong the rate increased from 31·7 to 38—a rate which, compared with other districts, is very high for non-Act labourers.

Death-rate among children.

31. The death-rate among children fell from 25·4 per mille in 1900 to 21·0 in 1901, due to the general healthiness of the year. Registration of infant mortality is, however, still very defective.

Sick and destitute coolies.

32. The number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries in 1901 was 654 as compared with 786 in 1900. Of 947 pauper and destitute coolies admitted into public dispensaries during 1901, 421 appear to have drifted from tea gardens, 150 were railway coolies, and the remainder belonged to the cultivating and labouring classes.

Four shelters attached to dispensaries were maintained in Cachar and seven in Sylhet as refuges for sick and destitute coolies. Of 292 persons relieved at these shelters, 169 were from tea gardens, 89 were free labourers, and 34 came from the railway and other works. The condition of these waifs and strays is miserable in the extreme, and 55 of them died under treatment, But their numbers represent a negligibly small percentage on the total coolie population of these districts. The total expenditure incurred in connection with these shelters was Rs. 2,472-7-5.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

Unhealthy gardens.

33. Gardens are classed as unhealthy on which the average mortality either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., the number of deaths from which the average is struck being not less than 10. The number of gardens on the unhealthy list in 1901 was 11 out of a total of 820 gardens, against 34 out of a total of 818 in 1900, the proportion being the lowest on record.

34. The following were the gardens classed as unhealthy in each district, together with the rate of mortality of that portion of the labour force in respect of which the garden was unhealthy :

District.	Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mortality per mille.
Cachar	Act population ...	1. Dwarbund ...	120·3
		2 Indragram ...	282·0
Kamrup	Ditto	3. Barduar ...	129·2
		4. Dolupadong ...	82·9
Darrang	Ditto	5. Namgaon ...	79·2
		6. New Addabari ...	135·5
		7. Hathigor ...	164·2
	Ditto	8. Kellyden ...	71·4
Nowgong ...	Act and non-Act population taken together ...	9. Ballijuri... ...	72·4
Sibsagar	Act population ...	10. Bokahola ...	84·7
Lakhimpur	Non-Act population ...	11. Dekajuli ...	109·8

In Sylhet no garden was on the unhealthy list. In Kamrup and Nowgong, there were, as in the previous year, one and two gardens, respectively, on the unhealthy list, but in all other districts the number of unhealthy gardens shows a decrease.

35. The measures taken in respect to these gardens were as follows :

(1) *Dwarbund.*—This garden had not been unhealthy for many years past. The sanitary arrangements are generally satisfactory, and no special action was considered necessary.

(2) *Indragram.*—This is usually a healthy garden; the high mortality was due principally to dysentery, the primary cause of this being a defective water-supply. But wages were low. The Deputy Commissioner was asked to instruct the management to effect an improvement in the water-supply. A second inspection will be shortly made to ascertain whether the improvement has been effected and what is the cause of the low average wage.

(3) *Barduar.*—This is usually a healthy garden, and high death-rate in 1901 was due to an outbreak of cholera. No special action was considered necessary.

(4) *Dolupadong.*—The medical arrangements were not satisfactory, and wages were low. The Commissioner has been requested to have the cause of the low wage rate and the general condition of the labourers specially enquired into at the next inspection of the garden.

(5) *Namgaon.*—The arrangements were satisfactory, and no special action was considered necessary.

(6) *New Addabari.*—This garden was also unhealthy in 1899 and 1900. Considerable improvements have been effected, and the rate of mortality has shown a very marked improvement. The Chief Commissioner awaits the returns for 1902 before deciding whether any special action is necessary.

(7) *Hathigor.*—The report did not disclose a very satisfactory state of affairs, but no action has yet been taken pending the receipt of further information.

(8) *Kellyden.*—The unhealthiness of this garden was attributed to the coolie lines in which the Act labourers live, which are badly situated and damp. The Civil Medical Officer has recommended that the Act labourers be transferred to new lines on a more suitable site, and the Manager has been requested to carry out this recommendation A further inspection will be made towards the close of the year.

(9) *Ballijuri*—Was unhealthy on Act and non-Act population taken together. The last medical inspection report indicated that the water-supply was defective and the labour force was inadequate. The Commissioner's attention has been drawn to these defects, and he has been requested to call on the Manager to improve the arrangements for the supply of drinking water. The garden will again be inspected in December next to see that these instructions have been carried out.

(10) *Boknhola*—Has never been previously on the unhealthy list. The arrangements are satisfactory, and no special action was considered necessary.

(11) *Dekajuli*.—Management was overstrict, the coolies being overworked and anæmic. The mortality among children was also very high. The garden was undermanned, and the coolies required more medical care and probably higher wages than they received. The proprietors of the garden were requested to modify the present system of management on more liberal lines.

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES.

Statement IX.—Offences in which tea planters or garden coolies were concerned.

36. Of 976 complaints by Managers of absence or desertion of coolies under Act XIII of 1859 or Act VI of 1901, only 38 per cent. resulted in conviction. Cases in which coolies were brought to trial for unlawful assembly, rioting or assault upon planters or their servants, fell from 54 to 39, and convictions from 213 to 187. There was, however, a considerable increase in general criminality amongst the tea-garden population, charges for theft or burglary rising from 197 to 315. In one district (Darrang) which contributes materially to the increase, serious riots occurred in April 1901, when the Bindukuri and Balipara *hâts* were looted by a number of tea-garden coolies and others in consequence of the high prices of paddy demanded by the traders. The disturbances at these two *hâts* alone produced 5 cases of rioting with 24 persons convicted, and 14 cases of theft with 28 persons convicted. Sixty complaints were made by coolies against garden Managers, charging them with the use of force or intimidation in order to procure the renewal of contracts. Of these complaints, 33 occurred in the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet and 22 in Nowgong. In Karimganj, 8 of the 33 complaints were filed as criminal complaints, the remainder being made in the form of miscellaneous petitions. Only one of the criminal petitions was brought to trial and resulted in the case being discharged. The other cases were settled amicably out of court, the complainants not being desirous of going further with the proceedings after they had succeeded in getting free from their employment. Of the 22 complaints which were made in the Nowgong district, 18 merely sought for the grant of a certificate of discharge. It appears that petitions of this description are not uncommon in other districts where, however, they are not registered as complaints under the Act; and the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts has stated that Managers generally disregard section 155 of the Act, which obliges them to give the labourer a certificate of discharge. The re-enlistment of time-expired coolies is one of the most important questions in garden management, and heavy losses would be suffered if a very large proportion of the labour force left upon the expiry of the statutory four years' term. But it is, of course, essential that re-enlistment should be encouraged by considerate treatment, not promoted by compulsion; and the subject is one which will receive the attention of the Administration.

In Nowgong two coolies were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment under section 182, Indian Penal Code, for having made false statements against a Manager.

Statement X.—Desertions.

37. Over 18,000 labourers deserted, equivalent to 4·57 per cent. of the force. For unexplained reasons desertions were more numerous than in the preceding year.

CHAPTER VII.

RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

Relations between employers and employed.

38. There was some improvement in the relations between employers and labourers. Trouble leading to criminal proceedings occurred in 39 cases, but the majority of these disturbances were of a very trivial nature. There were ten cases of rioting and assault in which 85 coolies were concerned, of whom two were acquitted on trial, ten were fined, and the remainder were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

The two most serious cases of assault on a Manager occurred in Darrang. The Manager of the Kolakuchi tea estate in this district was attacked and received a severe blow on the head from a coolie from whom he was trying to protect a sardar of the garden. The coolie was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment, and another coolie, who assisted him, was awarded six months' rigorous imprisonment.

The Manager of the Ghoirallie tea estate in the same district received very severe injuries at the hands of five coolies, the alleged cause of the attack being that he had abused and assaulted the wife of one of them. The woman appears to have told her husband that she had been assaulted—a statement which was proved to be without foundation—and a premeditated attack was made on the Manager by her husband and four other coolies. The husband was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment, two others to six months' and the remaining two to three months' rigorous imprisonment.

A deplorable occurrence was that which has attained notoriety as the "Lyall case," in which the Manager of a garden in the Nowgong district permitted some of his coolies to make a brutal attack upon others who had been insubordinate to him. Very severe injuries were inflicted, three men having bones broken. Mr. Lyall, his garden Babu Rajani Kanta Ghosh, and some of the coolies were tried by the Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, with the aid of a jury. The jury found Mr. Lyall not guilty of any offence and found the others guilty of causing grievous hurt, and the Babu guilty of wrongful confinement. The Deputy Commissioner disagreed with the jury's finding in regard to the Manager and referred the case to the High Court. The High Court convicted Mr. Lyall under section 147, Indian Penal Code, and sentenced him to one month's simple imprisonment and to a fine of Rs. 1,000. The Babu was sentenced, under the same section, to one month's simple imprisonment and to a fine of Rs. 200. The accused coolies were sentenced each to fifteen days' simple imprisonment.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Statement XI.—Inspections.

39. At the beginning of the year 1901, there were 818 gardens on the register. In Sylhet one garden was closed, and one new garden opened. In Darrang two gardens were closed, and four new gardens were opened in Lakhimpur. The total number of gardens in the register for the province at the end of the year was thus 820. Of these, 751 were liable to inspection, as employing Act labourers or more than 50 non-Act labourers. Of the gardens liable to inspection, 744 were inspected during the year.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers.

40. The relations between planters and the neighbouring villagers continue to be excellent, and only three cases of friction have been reported. In one case in Sylhet, a manager and his assistant were fined for damaging *sun*-grass on village land, which was wrongly claimed as belonging to the garden. The other cases were of little importance.

Colonisation of ex-tea-garden coolies.

41. The area of Government land settled direct with time-expired coolies in the province increased from 89,597 acres in 1900 to 96,993 acres in 1901. There is an increase in all districts except Sylhet and Nowgong. In addition to land held directly under Government, coolies rent land from the gardens on which they are employed, and they also hold land as sub-tenants of ryots or *mirasdars*.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.

42. The receipts and disbursements of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1901-1902 amounted to Rs. 77,030-7-2 and to Rs. 1,07,529-6-10 respectively. The substantial balance at the credit of the fund is being largely drawn upon, and some retrenchment of expenditure will be necessary. Receipts must tend to decrease with the growing inclination to substitute Act XIII of 1859 for Act VI of 1901.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. C. HENNIKER,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Shillong,

The 12th August 1902.

STATEMENTS.

STATEMENTS.

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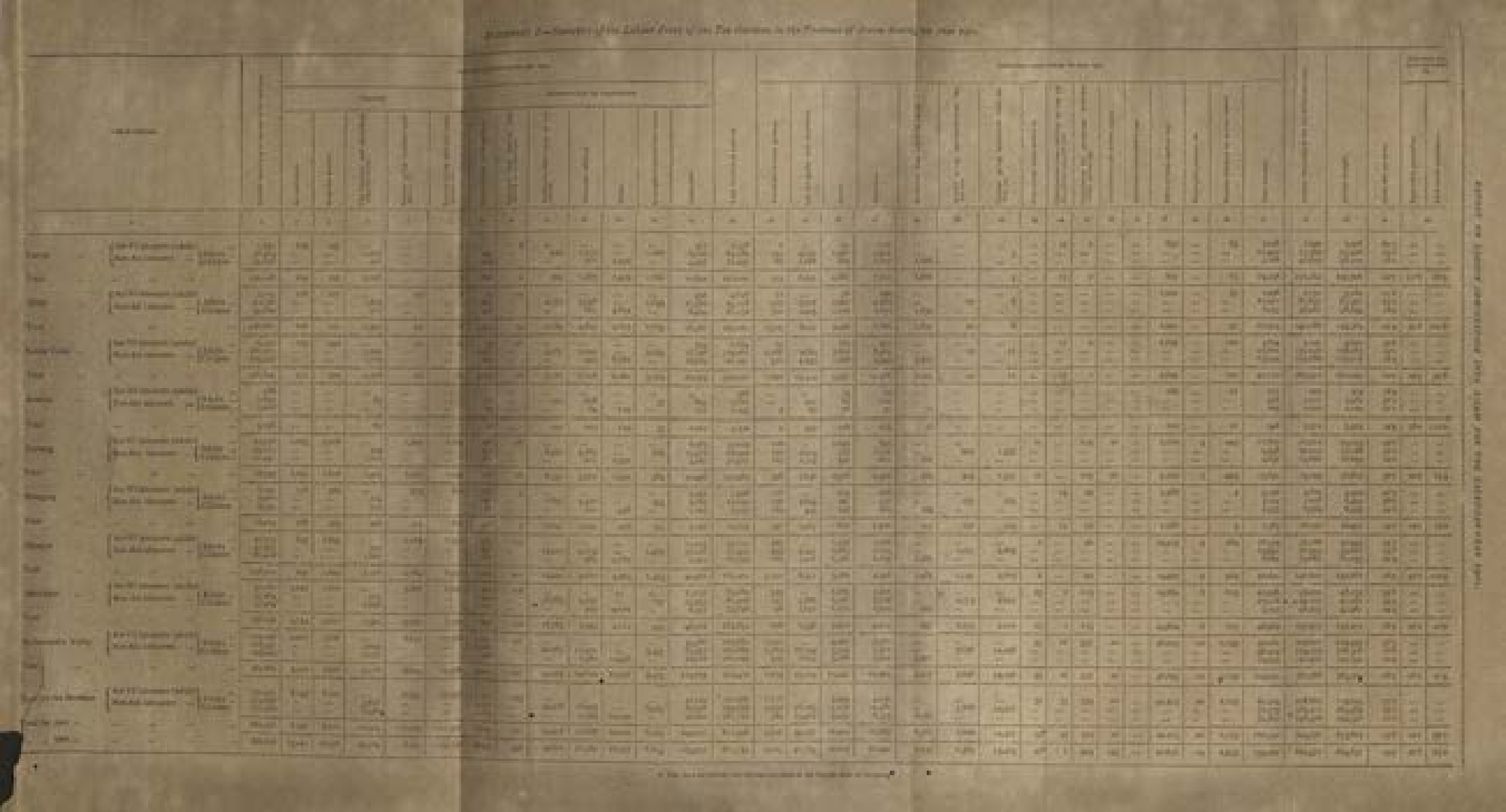

STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.	Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to column 10.	Percentage of column 10 to total labour force.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bengal: Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	31,996	29,268	61,264	54,646	58,939	113,585	86,642	88,207	174,849	50·45	43·89
Bengal: Behar	2,138	1,823	3,961	9,201	9,182	18,383	11,939	11,005	22,944	47·96	5·76
Bengal: Bengal Proper and Orissa ...	6,008	6,428	12,436	24,175	28,178	52,353	30,183	34,604	64,787	53·41	16·26
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh	2,289	1,968	4,257	24,180	28,058	52,238	26,469	30,046	56,515	53·16	14·19
Central Provinces	11,287	10,649	21,936	16,727	17,917	34,644	28,014	28,566	56,580	50·49	14·20
Madras	1,947	1,472	3,419	4,319	4,516	8,835	6,266	5,988	12,254	48·86	3·08
Bombay	...	8	8	50	27	77	50	35	85	41·18	·02
Nepal	19	16	35	61	47	108	80	63	143	44·06	·03
Assam	906	641	1,547	5,508	3,170	8,678	6,414	3,811	10,225	37·27	2·57
Total of 1901	56,590	52,271	108,861	150,467	150,054	259,521	196,057	202,325	398,382	50·79	100·00
,, ,, 1900	68,693	61,744	130,437	135,799	143,859	279,658	204,492	205,603	410,095	50·13	100·00

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

	Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.			Behar.			Bengal Proper and Orissa.			United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.			Central Provinces.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Imported by garden sardars.	1,831	1,767	3,598	123	98	221	253	198	451	158	125	283	1,772	1,470	3,242
,, ,, contractors	1,457	1,459	2,916	47	81	128	521	550	1,071	88	90	178	763	948	1,711
Total Act	3,288	3,226	6,514	170	179	349	774	748	1,522	246	215	461	2,535	2,418	4,953
Total non-Act ...	457	507	1,044	59	67	126	161	210	371	377	434	811	1,289	1,563	2,852
Total of 1901 ...	3,745	3,813	7,558	229	246	475	935	958	1,893	623	649	1,272	3,824	3,981	7,805
,, ,, 1900 ...	9,095	8,510	17,605	548	436	984	1,606	1,439	3,045	1,893	1,724	3,617	8,849	8,113	16,962

	Madras.			Bombay.			Nepal.			Assam.			Total.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Imported by garden sardars.	160	147	307	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	4,017	3,805	8,102
,, ,, contractors	85	58	143	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,961	3,186	6,147
Total of Act ...	245	205	450	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,258	6,991	14,249
Total of non-Act ...	157	184	371	...	...	...	...	...	...	63	...	63	2,593	3,045	5,638
Total of 1901 ...	432	389	821	...	...	...	...	...	...	63	...	63	9,851	10,036	19,887
,, 1900 ...	1,561	1,188	2,749	..	...	...	32	18	50	32	...	32	23,016	21,428	45,044

STATEMENT IV.—Recruitment of Act Labourers.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.	Number of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers.	Number of sardari coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under the Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts. Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.	Number who contracted at Dhubri.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Cachar	72	29	197	2·7	109	306	109	197	306	...
Sylhet	76*	62	227	2·9	128	355	128	227	355	...
Total Surma Valley... ...	148	91	424	2·8	237	661	237	424	661	...
Kamrup	5	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	816	507	1,618	1·9	1,093	2,711	1,093	1,618	2,711	...
Nowgong	218	207	565	2·5	178	743	166	471	637	106
Sibsagar	1,187	932	2,895	2·4	895	3,790	832	2,760	3,592	198
Lakhimpur	1,966	1,741	2,600	1·3	3,744	6,344	2,907	2,294	5,201	1,143
Total Assam Valley ...	4,192	3,392	7,678	1·8	5,910	13,588	4,998	7,143	12,141	1,447
Total of 1901	4,340	3,483	8,102	1·8	6,147	14,249	5,235	7,567	12,802	1,447†
,, ,, 1900	4,243	3,252	16,728	3·9	13,241	29,969	10,173	13,092	23,265	6,704

* Exclusive of two certificates cancelled at the request of the manager.
† These figures are for three months of the year.

STATEMENT V.—Debarkation Depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	Number who passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts. Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For sight only.	Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure. Buildings.	Establishment, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	2	2,512	2,018	...	3	...	2,015	...	1,079 2 6	3,455 12 6	4,534 15 0
Sylhet	7	3,947	2,498*	21	4	...	108	...	831 8 0	2,652 13 0	3,484 5 0
Kamrup	1	63	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,043 0 0	110 9 0	4,153 9 0
Darrang	2	4,120	3,521	794	33	31	2,032	...	2,100 0 0	2,463 14 5	4,563 14 5
Nowgong	1	1,341	1,074	11	12	5	1,046	12	310 10 0	583 12 9	894 6 9
Sibsagar	4	6,346	7,919†	1,252	84	45	3,973	...	737 3 0	3,049 4 2	3,786 7 2
Lakhimpur	1	8,894	8,067	2,225	61	...	5,295	...	382 15 0	1,967 6 0	2,350 5 0
Total of 1901 ...	18	26,223	25,097	4,303	197	81	14,469	1	9,484 6 6	14,283 7 10	23,767 14 4
,, ,, 1900 ...	17	62,733	62,015	6,128	639	1,185	33,196	1	6,061 14 3	13,478 14 10	19,540 13 1

* Includes 1,436 coolies destined for the Cachar district.
† Includes 1,373 ,, ,, ,, Lakhimpur district.
‡ Cancelled under section 10 (1) of Act VI of 1901.

STATEMENT VI.—*Fraudulent and Irregular Recruitment.*

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Goalpara (Dhubri)* ...	...	10	...	2	8	...	10	17
Cachar	...	2	2	...	...	...	2	2
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	1	6	6	...	...	1	6	11
Nowgong	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	2†
Sibsagar	1	4	2	1	2	...	5	5
Lakhimpur ...	6	40	22	15	5	5	41	57
Total of 1901 ...	8	63	32	18	15	6	65	94
,, ,, 1900 ...	29	124	66	29	50	8	145	217

* Figures for three months are given.
† Includes one dependant.

STATEMENT VII.—*Repatriation of Labourers.*

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated.					
		Under section 12 (section 10 or 11).	Under section 158 (section 131).	Under section 159.	Under section 160 (section 159 or 160).	Under section 161.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	8	...	...	6	...	2	8
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	173	8	50	18	...	...	76
Nowgong	33	1	4	12	...	1	18
Sibsagar	92	2	37	...	...	...	39
Lakhimpur	151	23	117	2	...	3	145
Total of 1901	457	34	208	38	...	6	286
,, ,, 1900	508	87	142	10	...	1	240

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.						Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.		
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the district or in the district.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 159.	Under section 161.	Total.
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
							Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	...	...	...	...	...	275 8 0	...	275 8 0
Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	97	...	...	...	...	97	206 9 0	...	206 9 0
Nowgong	13	...	2	...	...	15	203 0 0	...	203 0 0
Sibsagar	51	2	...	...	...	53	110 12 3	...	110 12 3
Lakhimpur	6	...	...	...	...	6	54 4 6	116 6 6	170 11 0
Total of 1901	167	2	2	...	...	171	850 1 9	116 6 6	966 8 3
,, ,, 1900	253	6	5	...	...	268	512 13 0	...	512 13 0

STATEMENT VIII.—*Deaths among all Classes of Labourers.*

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, cachexia or cardiac disorders.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	Act	1,508	7	21	25	7	2	9	20	91	60·3
	Non-Act adults ..	75,976	226	183	241	247	194	321	489	1,901	25·0
	Children ...	48,221	72	74	85	279	32	55	272	869	18·0
	Total adults ..	77,484	233	204	266	254	196	330	509	1,992	25·7
Sylhet	Act	3,182	6	7	14	10	13	7	19	76	23·8
	Non-Act adults ...	82,307	109	245	278	302	167	244	556	1,901	23·0
	Children ..	58,895	24	126	127	380	55	68	339	1,119	18·9
	Total adults ...	85,489	115	252	292	312	180	251	575	1,977	23·1
Kamrup	Act	304	6	3	...	2	5	...	8	24	78·9
	Non-Act adults ...	1,982	6	3	6	22	11	2	14	64	32·2
	Children ...	1,029	4	2	1	14	...	3	4	28	27·2
	Total adults ...	2,286	12	6	6	24	16	2	22	88	38·4
Darrang	Act	23,074	71	87	286	78	197	177	147	1,043	45·2
	Non-Act adults ...	27,088	49	42	118	94	122	169	139	733	27·0
	Children ...	26,655	17	41	70	134	70	57	151	540	20·2
	Total adults ...	50,162	120	129	404	172	319	346	286	1,776	35·4
Nowgong	Act	5,402	7	13	31	47	34	27	60	219	40·5
	Non-Act adults ..	6,494	6	21	34	68	33	25	60	247	38·0
	Children ...	6,539	2	11	15	65	9	2	41	145	22·1
	Total adults ...	11,896	13	34	65	115	67	52	120	466	39·1
Sibsagar	Act	37,945	124	134	247	100	135	227	331	1,318	34·7
	Non-Act adults ...	49,660	120	110	218	119	124	194	398	1,283	25·8
	Children ...	60,085	33	85	263	386	73	93	448	1,381	22·9
	Total adults ...	87,605	244	244	465	219	259	421	749	2,601	29·6
Lakhimpur	Act	28,232	173	160	360	199	161	228	402	1,683	34·8
	Non-Act adults ...	41,082	117	112	146	87	151	191	263	1,067	25·3
	Children ...	47,961	25	77	217	290	69	86	408	1,172	24·4
	Total adults ...	89,314	290	272	506	286	312	419	665	2,750	30·7
Grand total	Act	119,649	394	425	963	443	547	675	1,007	4,454	37·2
	Non-Act adults ...	284,589	633	716	1,041	939	802	1,1	1,919	7,196	25·2
	Children ...	249,376	177	416	778	1,548	308	364	1,663	5,254	21·0
	Total adults ...	404,238	1,027	1,141	2,004	1,382	1,349	1,821	2,926	11,650	28·8
	Total Labour force...	653,614	1,204	1,557	2,782	2,930	1,657	2,185	4,589	16,904	25·8

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by tea planters and garden coolies.

Districts	Sub-districts	Number of persons convicted under Act XIII of 1859			Absconding under Act XIII of 1859		Desertion under Act XIII of 1859		Refusing medicine, Act VI of 1870		Refusing, neglecting, or omitting to perform, or wilfully performing improperly or with bad workmanship, any work he has undertaken		Other offences by planters against labour contracts		Offences committed by coolies against the contract			Assaults on officers of Government in the discharge of their duties		Number of persons punished, &c., for offences	
		Number of persons		Number of cases		Number of persons		Number of cases		Number of persons		Number of persons		Number of persons		Number of persons		Number of cases			Number of persons	
		Convicted	Convicted		Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted	Convicted				
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Cachar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Karimganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Hailakandi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sylhet	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Habiganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sunamganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kamrup	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Barpeta	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Darrang	Mangaldai	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Tezpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nowgong	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jagi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sibsagar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jorhat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Golaghat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lakhimpur	North Lakhimpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Dibrugarh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sadiya	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total of 1901		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
" " 1900		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

* Includes all persons fined by courts for minor offences, under section 104 of Act VI of 1901, formerly and termed as criminal complaints.

STATEMENT X.—Statement of desertions among adults.

Districts	Sub-districts	Deserters			Percentage of deserters on total strength during			Number of deserters taken to the depôt of the Controller	Number brought back				
		Men	Women and children	Total	Last 3 months	Year last October 31 (1900)	Total adult population		By constables	By Managers	By Police	By apprehenders	Total
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Karimganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Hailakandi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sylhet	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Habiganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sunamganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kamrup	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Barpeta	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Darrang	Mangaldai	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Tezpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nowgong	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jagi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sibsagar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jorhat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Golaghat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lakhimpur	North Lakhimpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Dibrugarh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sadiya	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total of 1901		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
" " 1900		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

STATEMENT XI.—Inspections.

Districts	Sub-districts	Number of gardens under the Act visited	Number of new and garden gardens visited for the first time	Total number of gardens visited	Number inspected by Sub-Deputy	Number inspected by Inspector	Number inspected by Civil Surgeon	Number inspected by Controller	Total inspections	Number of inspections made by Sub-Deputy Commissioners	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioners	Number of inspections made by Extra Assistant Commissioners	Number of inspections made by other officers	Total number of inspections made	Number of gardens which received no visit
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Karimganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Hailakandi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sylhet	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Habiganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sunamganj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kamrup	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Barpeta	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Darrang	Mangaldai	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Tezpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nowgong	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jagi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sibsagar	Sadr	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Jorhat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Golaghat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lakhimpur	North Lakhimpur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Dibrugarh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sadiya	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total of 1901		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
" " 1900		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

STATEMENT XII.—Showing the Receipts and Expenditure of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1901-1902.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Contractors' license fees under section 15 ...	431 0 0	2,402 0 0	2,833 0 0	Salaries of depôt establishment, including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, allowance to Hospital Assistants, compounders, dressers, cooks, servants, travelling allowance, and compensation for dearness of provisions ...	12,968 11 7	3,830 3 6	16,798 15 1
Recruiters' license fees under section 16 ...	...	2,632 0 0	2,632 0 0				
Registration fees under sections 38 and 72 ...	...	6,479 0 0	6,479 0 0	Supplies and services, including expenses during the prevalence of epidemics and miscellaneous under grants for medical purposes and diet of patients, cushing, and bedding, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty construction and repairs, postage charges, telegrams, purchase and repair of furniture, rents, rates, and taxes, and miscellaneous under hospital and dispensaries, contingent charges ...	17,525 4 8	2,093 15 2	19,619 3 10
Rates under section 127 ...	54,406 8 0	422 0 0	54,828 8 0				
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	3,460 15 3	...	3,460 15 3	Grants to dispensaries ...	4,760 0 0	...	4,760 0 0
Fees for labour under sections 112 and 112B ...	645 0 0	...	645 0 0	Salaries under 26.—Scientific, etc., including Inspectors, Travelling Inspectors of Immigrants, Emigration Agents, and Assistant Surgeons, etc,	6,176 3 12	19,544 7 11	25,720 11 10
Medical examination fees...	358 0 0	...	358 0 0				
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	716 8 3	...	716 8 3	Clerks and servants ...	9,260 10 8	6,286 7 7	15,547 3 3
Fines and miscellaneous ...	488 8 11	...	488 8 11	Travelling allowance ...	8,652 6 10	1,914 14 11	10,567 5 9
Dict, etc., charges recovered	1,674 4 3	...	1,674 4 3	Compensation for dearness of provisions	48 0 0	20 0 0	68 0 0
Fees for licenses of inland steamers and native boats under section 99 ...	...	1,050 0 0	1,050 0 0	Allowances for registering coolies	...	288 2 0	288 2 0
Capitation fees ...	...	960 0 0	960 0 0	House rent allowance ...	326 12 4	...	326 12 4
Fines	...	20 0 0	20 0 0	Fees for inspecting tea gardens	3,930 0 0	...	3,930 0 0
Miscellaneous	...	274 4 0	274 4 0	Miscellaneous, including medical examination charges, postage, telegrams, printing, and stationery, share cost of contracting and account office, miscellaneous under "Contingencies" 26.—Scientific, etc.), printing at private presses under 30.—Stationery, and burial charges of paupers, charges for relief of distress, cost of re, draining invalided labourers, and petty construction and repairs under 32.—Miscellaneous, and pension under 29.—Superannuation.	5,761 6 1	3,297 6 3	9,058 12 4
Advances	740 6 6	...	740 6 6				
				Refunds	5 14 9	...	5 14 9
				Contribution on account of treasury establishment ...	...	141 1 5	141 1 5
				Advances	775 1 3	...	775 1 3
				Deficiency (i.e., excess of payments over receipts transferred from Bengal)	22,428 6 9	—3,328 6 9	
Total	62,921 3 3	14,109 4 0	77,030 7 3	Total	93,420 2 10	14,109 4 0	1,07,529 6 10
Opening balance ...	97,941 2 10	...	97,941 2 10	Closing balance	67,442 3 3	...	67,442 3 3
Grand total	1,60,862 5 0	14,109 4 0	1,74,971 9 0	Grand total	1,60,862 5 0	14,109 4 0	1,74,971 9 0

SHILLONG : Printed and published by CONYNGHAM FRANCIS, Press Superintendent, Assam, at the Secretariat Printing Office : (Rev.) No. 209—300—21-8-1902.

RESOLUTION

ON

IMMIGRANT LABOUR IN ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1903-1904.

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1904.

Price 1s. 6d.] [*Price One Rupee.*

STATEMENTS.

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Map of
ASSAM
IMMIGRATION REPORT

Resolution on Immigrant Labour in Assam for the year 1903-1904.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in the General Department, No. 4981R., dated Shillong, the 5th November 1904.

Read—

The Immigrant Labour Reports of the Deputy Commissioners of Labour Districts.

RESOLUTION.

THE annual reports on immigrant labour, to which this Resolution refers, deal only with labour imported for employment on tea gardens, in the oil-refinery at Digboi, in coal mines, and in a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. Labourers employed on railways and those who migrate annually to the province for temporary employment, generally returning to their homes in April or May, are not included.

Statistics of the labour force.

2. In Statement I are given statistics of the labour force showing the additions to, and deductions from, the force during the year. The total labour force, Act and non-Act, included 657,106 persons on the 30th June last, as compared with 650,937 persons on the 30th June 1903. The mean annual strength also increased from 644,045 to 654,021. The increase in the labour force, in spite of difficulties in recruitment, is satisfactory.

The number of labourers under Act VI of 1901 fell from 93,278 to 84,306 and the number of importations under the Act from 26,684 to 22,162. It is a significant fact that a third of the adult immigrants were not under penal contract at the time of their arrival in Assam. The number of labourers who entered locally into contracts under Act VI increased by 6,164. Lakhimpur, Darrang, and Cachar are principally responsible for this increase in local contracts, most of the other districts showing a decrease. The increase in Darrang is attributed to a tendency amongst the planters of that district to renew agreements under Act VI rather than Act XIII, the reason for which is said to be uncertainty as to the way in which Act XIII will be interpreted by the Magistrate in the event of a reference to the courts. In Cachar and Sylhet, where local contracts under Act VI have in the past been almost unknown, 641 and 329 such contracts were executed. But this innovation is due to the managements of two concerns only.

The total number of labourers classed as "non-Act" increased from 557,659 to 572,800, Cachar alone showing a small decrease and all other districts an increase under this head. There was an increase of 12,425 and 2,716 in the number of non-Act adults and children, respectively. If the returns were prepared according to rule, the "non-Act" labour force should include only persons who are resident upon tea-gardens, and should exclude temporary hands, which in some localities are a most important auxiliary to the permanent labour force. But it is doubtful whether the figures are correct in this matter; and, generally, the labour statistics can only be accepted as approximately correct, since they are taken as reported by tea-garden offices, and are subjected to no check.

Distribution of the labour force.

3. Of the total labour force of the province, 39·61 per cent. is employed in the Surma Valley and 60·39 per cent. in the Assam Valley. The Act population, which forms only 12·8 per cent. of the whole, is mainly employed in the Assam Valley, Act labourers in the Surma Valley forming only 3·9 per cent. of the total force.

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

4. The nationality and sex of the adult labour force are shown in Statement II. The distribution of the labour force amongst the various castes of the recruiting districts is very much the same as in the preceding year. The statement shows an increase of 2,722 under the head of natives of Assam, but, as remarked above, it is uncertain whether casual labour has not been included. In sex, the adult labour force is almost equally divided, the percentage of female population to the total number of adults being 50·13. Amongst Act labourers the proportion of women is 46 per cent., while in the non-Act population they are slightly in the majority. Children form 38·4 per cent. of the total labour force.

Labour force and acreage under tea.

5. The area under tea cultivation decreased from 339,640 acres to 338,278 acres, but the actual tea-bearing area increased owing to the maturing of young plants by nearly 5,000 acres. The number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea increased from 117 to 119, but is still considerably below the actual requirement of the tea gardens. The averages in the Surma Valley and Assam Valley were 115 and 121, respectively.

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

6. The following statement gives particulars of the coolie immigration into the province during the past five years :—

Provincial figures of immigration.

Class of labourers.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902-1903.	1903-1904.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act { Sardari adults	7,571	16,728	8,102	7,988	5,031
Act { Contractors' adults	11,065	13,241	6,147	6,088	6,095
Non-Act adults	7,236	15,075	5,638	6,123	6,643
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	25,872	45,044	19,887	20,199	17,769
Children	6,036	17,689	6,336	6,485	4,393
Grand total	31,908	62,733	26,223	26,684	22,162

There was a slight increase in the number of non-Act adults imported, but the figures as a whole show a marked falling off in importation. With the gradual recovery of the industry from the recent depression the demand for labour is on the increase and complaints of the shortness of the labour supply are universal. The difficulty in recruiting is illustrated by the fact that, whereas 7,085 garden sardars were granted certificates, as against 6,097 in 1902-1903, the number of coolies imported by this agency under contract was 5,031, or 0·7 per sardar, against 7,988, or 1·3 per sardar in 1902-1903. In Sylhet the proportion was only 0·4 per sardar. These proportions do not take into account coolies who were imported without agreements, some of whom were no doubt engaged by sardari agency. But it is clear that sardari agency is failing as a means of enlisting labour. The number of contractors' coolies imported remained practically unchanged. No further extension of section 90 of the Act was effected in the course of the year.

Out of the 22,162 immigrants of 1903-1904, 15,411 were imported through the agency of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association,—11,879 having been recruited by sardars, and 3,532 by contractors. Importation through this agency declined by a third.

7. Owing to the unpopularity of Assam and to the irksomeness of the journey, the stream of immigration is affected very greatly indeed by any circumstances which offer alternative means of livelihood to service on a tea garden. Complaints are numerous of the strictness with which Act VI is worked in the recruiting districts. But for the great diminution in the supply of labour which has been felt during the last three years, the causes chiefly responsible are the good harvests that have been gathered in the recruiting districts and the competition of the coal industry. During the year the Chief Commissioner has given much attention to the question of rendering the journey to Assam less deterrent by securing the withdrawal of various rules which compel sardars and their coolies to spend much time in depôts, and to accept cooked rations. His proposals have been met most sympathetically by the Government of Bengal. Discussion is proceeding with the Administration of the Central Provinces, and the Chief Commissioner hopes that before long it will be possible to arrange that sardars and their coolies will travel to Assam with the freedom enjoyed by ordinary third-class passengers. This concession will, it is hoped, open the way to reform in the system of sardari recruiting which appears to offer much promise. It has been shown by enquiries that were conducted by Mr. J. C. Arbuthnott, C.I.E., in the planting districts of the Duars, Madras, and Ceylon that Assam stands alone in employing as its recruiting agency, not true sardars—men of some position who can engage coolies, conduct them to the planting districts, and look after them on the garden,—but men belonging to the ordinary coolie class who possess no influence in their villages, and are liable to abscond with their advances, or to sell the coolies they recruit, unless closely supervised in the recruiting districts. So long as the transit of sardari coolies is hampered by the conditions which involve loss of caste, the employment of true sardars is out of the question. But circumstances will be entirely changed in this respect if the journey to Assam is freed from annoying or degrading conditions,—and especially when railway communication is open to Gauhati,—and it may be hoped that recruitment will gradually develop along the lines which have proved successful in other parts of India.

8. The districts which show the largest falling off in recruitment are the Central Provinces and Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal parganas, and in each case the decrease is most noticeable in the case of sardari coolies. Recruitment from the other districts is either about the same as in the previous year or shows a slight increase. The percentage of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers was slightly higher than in 1902-1903. The *Nowgong district*, moreover, showed a considerable falling off in this respect.

Statement III.—Nationality and sex of adult immigrants and agency by which recruited.

9. The mortality which occurred during the journey of coolies to Assam was happily, insignificant. There were only 16 deaths, against 57 and 69, respectively, in the two preceding years. Ten of the 16 deaths were due to cholera.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

10. The railway routes *vid* Dhubri and *vid* Chandpur and Tinsukia were opened as alternative routes for all emigrants to the Brahmaputra Valley. The Assam-Bengal Railway was largely used to convey coolies to the Surma Valley. Of 2,777 coolies imported into Sylhet, only 643 passed through the river depôts, the remainder having been brought into the district by railway, while of 1,811 immigrants to Cachar, 1,178 were imported by railway and 633 by steamer. No death occurred amongst coolies in transit by train or steamer to the Surma Valley, and none died in the depôts of the Sylhet or Cachar districts.

Transit of immigrants to the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys.

11. The depôts at Rangamati and Komolabari in the Assam Valley and of Katigora, Manumukh, Maulvi Bazar, and Barlekha were closed during the year. The depôts of Kulaura and Shaistaganj, which were closed at the end of the preceding year, but were shown in the statement for 1902-1903, have been omitted from the statement annexed to this Resolution. The number of cases in which coolies were detained at depôts for want of a guide decreased from 5,447 to 2,641. The decrease in the districts of Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur was very marked.

Statement V.—Debarkation depôts.

12. Complaints of fraudulent recruitment rose from 48 to 64. The increase occurred in the Lakhimpur district, and is ascribed by the Deputy Commissioner to the recruiting of wandering coolies at Raniganj and Calcutta. Of the 64 complaints only 42 were established.

Statement VI.—Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

A large number of coolies were repatriated from the Lakhimpur district. Thirty-two, who had been imported without agreement, were repatriated at the cost of the Inland Labour Transport Fund; 17 were repatriated under section 161 at the expense of the garden, on the ground that they had been fraudulently recruited; 106 were similarly repatriated under section 158, and 10 under section 12.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

13. Owing to the decline of immigration the number of outstanding contracts under Act VI of 1901 decreased; but more use was made of the provisions of the Act which legalize contracts entered into locally on the tea gardens:—

Number of contracts made.

—	1902-1903.	1903-1904.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4
Contracts—			
— in the actual labour districts under section 118 of the Act	4,374	6,237	+ 42·59
— in the actual labour districts under section 121 of the Act...	15,019	19,320	+ 28·63
— in the recruiting districts	14,076	11,126	— 20·95
Total	33,469	36,683	+ 9·60

As already explained, the increased use of sections 118 and 121 is due in great measure to a change of system on a few gardens in the districts of Darrang, Cachar, and Sylhet. The number of contracts enforceable under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code executed during the year was 3,148, against 3,625 in the preceding

year. In Lakhimpur the number of such contracts was more than doubled, while in Sibsagar there was a large decrease.

14. The total number of contracts executed under section 118 of Act VI of 1901, which required verification by an Inspector, and the total number of contracts verified are shown in the margin. The number of contracts "for verification" includes contracts entered into during the year, as well as those executed in the preceding year which were not verified in that year. The law requires the Inspector, to whom duplicates of the contracts are sent after execution, to verify them on his next visit to the garden, and as these contracts are for one year only, and gardens are ordinarily inspected only once a year, some of the contracts necessarily escape verification. Inspections should be timed so as to admit of the verification of as many contracts as possible soon after their execution, but this is sometimes difficult to arrange.

Verification of contracts.

District.	Total for verification.	Total verified.
Cachar	636	4
Sylhet	329	240
Kamrup	...	...
Darrang	2,063	1,644
Nowgong	665	465
Sibsagar	880	670
Lakhimpur	3,343	1,961
Total	7,911	4,984

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

15. The expiry of contracts was punctually reported. The number of contracts cancelled under section 10 of Act VI decreased from 47 to 41, out of which 14 were contracts of women who had come to the province unaccompanied by husbands or guardians. Forty-one of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled were repatriated.

Two hundred and seven contracts were cancelled under section 131 of the Act on account of permanent incapacity to labour, against 221 in 1902-1903. In connection with the recruitment of three coolies for the Moabund tea estate in the Sibsagar district, whose contracts were cancelled under this section, a reference was made to the Government of Bengal, with the result that the forms of Medical Examiner's certificates (Bengal Emigration Forms Nos. 10 and 14) were revised so as to bring their wording into conformity with that of the sections of the Act under which they are prescribed.

16. Twenty-seven contracts were redeemed—4 in Cachar, 13 in Darrang, 2 in Sibsagar, and 8 in Lakhimpur—against 14 altogether in 1902-1903. One thousand seven hundred and ninety-two contracts were dissolved by mutual consent, of which 1,164 were cancelled in the district of Sibsagar alone. The majority of these contracts were cancelled with a view to renewal under Act XIII. In the case of one garden in the Golaghat subdivision of the Sibsagar district it was found that contracts under Act XIII were being substituted for contracts under Act VI very shortly after the arrival of the coolies on the garden, and that the advance given to the coolies was considerably less than the loss of pay entailed by the change in the form of contract. In such cases it is very necessary that the Inspector should satisfy himself by enquiry that the change has been made with the labourer's free consent. The only district in which any considerable use was made by managers of the provisions of sections 130 and 192 of the Act, by which periods of absence through sickness for more than 30 days and of absence from work without reasonable excuse are added to the term of contract, was Nowgong, where 542 endorsements under section 192 and 34 under section 130 were made.

Statement VII.—Repatriation of coolies.

17. Of 339 coolies who were given the option of repatriation, 45 preferred to remain on the garden or in the labour district, 290 electing to be sent to their homes. With a view to facilitating the repatriation of unsuitable labourers and reducing the cost which it entailed, the rules on the subject were modified so as to allow repatriated emigrants who are capable of taking care of themselves to travel without an escort. This change was introduced with the concurrence of the Government of Bengal, by whom a corresponding amendment was made in the rules in force in that province.

Working of Act XIII of 1859.

18. The following extracts from District Officers' reports indicate the great and increasing importance of Act XIII in the economy of the tea industry :—

Cachar.—Act XIII agreements are almost invariably oral, advances paid being shown in a register called Act XIII Agreement Register or Register of Advances. In this register is also shown the number of days each coolie has to work on the garden. The period of these agreements is generally 313 or 626 days, most commonly 313 days. The amount of the advances varies from Rs. 6 to Rs. 12. The proportion of the advance received monthly is generally shown in the *Hazri* Register, but the practice varies with the garden. In many gardens no recoveries are made at all, and this of course invalidates the contract, though, as far as the coolie is concerned, a bonus is more advantageous than an advance. On the Ratanpur tea estate a case came to light where the contract was for 939 days, with an advance of Rs. 3. A refusal to enforce those contracts as unconscionable was upheld by the High Court on appeal. As a rule, however, Act XIII is fairly worked, and its provisions, admitting of

a contract for a number of days, are eminently suited to the conditions of this district, where most of the coolies have much rice cultivation. The popular garden is not that on which wages are highest, but where leave is freely given, where a strict attendance at muster is not enforced, and where there is plenty of garden land available for rice cultivation. These conditions obtain at most of the gardens in this district. It would no doubt be a good thing if Act XIII contracts were limited to 313 days and if they could not be enforced after the expiry of, say, 600 days from the date of the agreement, and if a bonus be substituted for an advance. It is nothing less than a very great misfortune that the confidence of employers of labour in the efficacy of the Act should be shaken. Some hold the opinion that different District Magistrates read the Act differently, and that therefore there is no security for them. This result is partly due to the fact that up to four or five years ago the Act appears to have been lazily administered and contracts enforced in which the advance had not been deducted. I have tried to impress on Managers that, as long as they treat their coolies well, and give a substantial advance or a small advance accompanied by a bonus, there is no fear of the contracts not being enforced. As a matter of fact, the complaints against Act XIII do not seem very well founded.

Sylhet.—Act XIII is highly favoured by the Managers as well as by the coolies. Time-expired labourers are generally re-employed under Act XIII of 1859, and receive, each time they renew their contracts, a sum varying from Rs. 6 to Rs. 15 in the shape of an advance to work for another year. Many gardens which used to employ Act labourers have since discontinued the practice and converted the Act VI agreements into Act XIII contracts. A very large proportion of non-Act labourers in this district are under Act XIII. The contracts are, for the most part, oral, the only evidence of the agreement being an entry in the cash book. These contracts are almost invariably for 313 days. The maximum amount of advance is Rs. 15 for a man and Rs. 12 for a woman and the minimum being Rs. 8 and Rs. 6, respectively. These advances in the majority of cases are never recovered; the agreement is therefore not enforceable under Act XIII.

Teepur.—There has been a check to the increased use of Act XIII of 1859 in the district. The High Court ruling in the case of Rash Behari De *versus* Rupkalia Rendi caused a feeling of uncertainty. Another serious drawback to the utility of Act XIII from the planter's point of view is that a coolie convicted under the Act cannot be compelled to return to a garden to work. More than half the coolies ordered to return to the garden to complete their contracts in cases disposed of during the year preferred to undergo imprisonment. The contracts under Act XIII are generally for periods of 313, 626, and 939 days. Only on two gardens in the district are such contracts in writing to my knowlege. An unsatisfactory feature of contracts under Act XIII is the entire absence of the ordinary formality which should accompany the execution of a contract. The Manager or Assistant gives the advance to the coolie, but generally the garden kerani is supposed to explain the terms of the contract, and this is not done in the presence of the Manager or Assistant. I refused to issue process in a case for the enforcement of a contract under Act XIII for 1,252 days. Contracts for periods exceeding two years are now executed under Act VI on the gardens of the Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Company, Act XIII only being used for contracts for 313 and 626 days.

Sibsagar.—The number of contracts in force under Act XIII increased from 33,167 to 33,556. Of these, 17,845, are in writing and 15,711 are oral contracts supported by entries in the Cash Book of Advances. These contracts generally bind down the coolie to work for a certain number of days. The usual advance given to men under Act XIII does not exceed Rs. 12 in the case of a man and Rs. 9 in the case of a woman, the maximum advance usually given to a man for three years being Rs. 36 and the minimum advance to a woman for one year Rs. 6. New coolies who arrive as dependants are generally put on contract under Act XIII, although on some gardens occasionally they are put under Act VI. Contracts are generally renewed under Act XIII, but on certain gardens renewals are still made under Act VI. The number of gardens on which renewals are made under Act VI is, however, small, and greater recourse is had to Act XIII. On many gardens Act XIII coolies receive the same advantages as those under Act VI and do not suffer by being placed under Act XIII. On some gardens, too, although the contract under Act XIII may be for a certain number of days, yet only calendar periods are enforced. On the whole, Act XIII works well, and recourse to the Courts for the enforcement of contracts under this Act does not appear to have been very frequent.

Lakhimpur.—Act XIII works very well in this district. Contracts are almost invariably in writing. The bonus usually paid is from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 per annum for a man and Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 for a woman, wages being usually at the rate of Rs. 6 per man and Rs. 5 per woman. On many gardens the conditions of labour under Act XIII are identical with those under Act VI, even to the extent of the issue of rice at Rs. 3 per maund. Contracts are nearly always for a fixed number of days, but in enforcing these any fraction of a day or *hazira* is always counted as a full day. No cases of illegal detention or arrest under Act XIII have been reported. The coolies put under the Act generally understand its limitations pretty thoroughly, and in cases of disagreement know well that they will be set free to go where they like at the expiry of the imprisonment if they are proved to be at fault. As a rule, coolies prosecuted under Act XIII generally agree to complete their contracts on their first appearance in court. There was only one case of imprisonment under Act XIII.

There is a curious difference between the experience of the Darrang and the Lakhimpur districts in respect to the feelings with which run-a-way coolies regard the prospect of returning to their gardens. The Deputy Commissioners of Cachar and Darrang notice that the working of the Act suffers from uncertainty as to the way in which its provisions will be construed by different Magistrates. It has been held that a Magistrate administering Act XIII is not subject, in all respects, to the judicial control which higher tribunals exercise under the ordinary Criminal Law. Anything which discredits Act XIII is, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, to be deprecated, and endeavours have been made to secure uniformity of procedure by calling attention to important rulings of the High Court, and by prescribing the periodical examination by District Magistrates of the proceedings of Magistrates subordinate to them.

From the point of view of employers, the Act XIII agreement, as it is called, offers the advantages of less formality and freedom from the many legal regulations and conditions to which Act VI contracts are subject, while, on the other hand, it gives somewhat less control over the labour force. It is not probable that coolies, as a rule, realise very clearly the distinction between the two kinds of contract, but the advance of money which is an essential feature of agreements enforceable under Act XIII is naturally an attraction in their eyes. In spite of the extreme informality of these contracts—the only written evidence of them being usually an entry of the advance in a garden register—cases of dispute or misunderstanding in connection with them are comparatively rare.

In view of the comparatively small tea interests in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, and of the fact that in the former district there are now no coolies bound by contracts under Act VI of 1901, while in the latter there are 26 only, the Chief Commissioner is disposed to think that the time has come when the Act should be withdrawn from these districts, except the provisions which relate to returns and inspections. All the local planters are in favour of this measure, but before taking action, the Indian Tea Association has been consulted.

Wages of Act labourers.

19. As stated in paragraph 22 of last year's Resolution, a new form of monthly wages return was prescribed in April 1903. Its adoption was in response to objections raised by the Indian Tea Association to the one previously in use, and it was designed to show, not only the average wage earned by garden labour forces as a whole,—that is to say, the result of dividing the total amount of wages disbursed by the total number of coolies in employ,—but the average wage earned by the coolies who were offered work, were able to work, and actually turned out to work. The form was necessarily complicated, and a scrutiny of the compiled statistics indicates that they cannot be accepted. It is indeed improbable that a complicated return of this kind can be correctly prepared in tea-garden offices without the exercise of more official supervision than has been customary in the past or would be liked by the planters. Disregarding the effect of absences from work on the wage averages and calculating them on the total garden labour force, they stand as follows :—

Subdivision.	Average monthly cash wages, including all wages paid under section 13(1) and 13(1), value of food in lieu of such allowance, and of rations provided under section 13(e) and also including piece earnings.		Monthly average of payments made as bonus.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	4 10 6	3 15 3	0 5 2	0 3 11
Hailakandi	4 4 6	3 11 8	0 5 9	0 7 2
North Sylhet	4 3 11	3 0 5	...	...
Karimganj	4 5 6	3 7 8	0 3 7	0 3 8
South Sylhet	4 7 5	3 8 9	0 8 6	0 5 3
Habiganj	4 10 5	3 15 4	0 0 9	0 1 0
Kamrup	4 3 1	3 13 7	0 0 4	0 0 4
Darrang Sadr...	4 8 3	3 15 2	0 9 10	0 8 10
Mangaldai	4 13 1	3 13 5	0 2 11	0 2 10
Nowgong	4 15 0	4 1 5	0 5 6	0 4 4
Sibsagar Sadr...	5 1 2	3 15 7	0 8 0	0 4 2
Jorhat	4 8 5	3 12 3	0 11 2	0 3 0
Golaghat	4 7 10	3 13 3	0 2 0	0 0 11
Lakhimpur Sadr	5 3 10	4 7 0	0 6 7	0 4 10
North Lakhimpur	4 11 7	3 13 0	0 2 1	0 7 6
Average	5 0 8	4 1 7	0 7 6	0 5 2

The figures show a general small rise in the earnings of Act coolies, the average monthly wages being Rs. 5-0-3 for men and Rs. 4-1-7 for women, against Rs. 5-0-3 and Rs. 4-0-3, respectively, in 1902-1903, and the average of bonus received per month 7 annas 6 pies and 5 annas 2 pies, respectively, as compared with 6 annas 1 pie and 3 annas 11 pies.

20. It appears that, speaking generally, the average number of days in a month on which Act coolies turn out to work is 21 or 22,—out of the 26 working days the month is supposed to include. Calculated upon coolies *actually working*, the wage rates would be then about a fifth higher than as shown above. On the other hand, the rates include sick allowances, which it would be necessary to omit in calculating the average earnings of *working* coolies. The Chief Commissioner is doubtful as to the utility of calling upon managers to submit a complicated monthly wage return. For general statistical purposes it would apparently suffice if information were specially collected at periodic intervals. As a practical indication of the condition of the coolie in different localities, the figures are of little or no value. It is admitted on all hands that a low average wage is, more often than not, a feature of a popular garden, as it indicates that the coolies possess some rice cultivation, are given leave freely, and are not systematically turned out to work.

Wages of non-Act labourers.

21. Corresponding averages are given below for non-Act coolies :—

Subdivision.	Average monthly cash wage, including rice, subsistence allowances, and value of rice or various provisions in lieu of wages or subsistence allowance.			Monthly average of payments made as bonus.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar sadr	4 9 6	3 6 3	2 2 2	0 5 0	0 4 0	0 1 1
Hailakandi	4 11 8	3 9 7	2 4 5	0 4 5	0 3 5	0 0 7
North Sylhet	4 7 6	3 12 3	2 0 1	0 6 4	0 4 2	...
Karimganj	4 8 10	3 1 9	2 3 4	0 5 3	0 5 5	...
South Sylhet	4 7 9	3 0 7	1 14 0	0 7 5	0 6 3	0 0 4
Habiganj	4 12 6	3 13 6	2 5 0	0 7 11	0 6 11	0 2 6
Kamrup	4 10 8	3 3 11	2 2 6	0 0 8	0 0 2	0 0 1
Darrang sadr	4 11 2	3 7 2	2 5 6	0 8 10	0 7 11	0 0 10
Mangaldai	5 6 8	3 4 3	2 2 1	0 0 8	0 0 4	0 0 2
Nowgong	5 1 0	3 11 8	2 7 3	0 6 3	0 5 3	0 1 3
Sibsagar sadr	4 15 1	3 3 11	2 6 9	0 10 6	0 6 0	0 1 6
Jorhat	4 6 6	3 1 11	2 3 11	0 10 5	0 6 5	0 2 3
Golaghat	4 7 3	3 3 1	2 5 2	0 11 2	0 6 1	0 1 7
Lakhimpur sadr	5 0 7	4 5 6	2 15 1	0 10 1	0 8 4	0 2 5
North Lakhimpur	5 0 6	3 7 1	2 3 7	0 5 9	0 5 7	...
Average	4 14 0	3 7 2	2 5 8	0 7 10	0 6 0	0 1 3

The average wage earned is generally less than in the case of Act coolies. This is no doubt attributable to the fact that non-Act coolies work less regularly than Act coolies, though the returns, as submitted by District Officers, do not show this to have been the case. But, as already stated, the Chief Commissioner distrusts the correctness of the returns in so far as they pretend to exhibit anything beyond the total wage disbursements and the total strength of garden labour forces.

Working of section 5 of the Act.

22. It appears that section 5 of Act VI, requiring payment of full wages to new coolies for the performance of half tasks, is generally observed; the case of a garden in Cachar where the provision was found to have been neglected is noticed in Chapter VI. There was no instance of a new coolie being brought forward to be certified as fit to perform full tasks.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

23. The marginal table shows that the birth rate on tea gardens in Assam for the year 1903-1904 was 28·9 per mille of total and 93·4 per mille of adult female population, against 30·8 and 98·6 per mille, respectively, in 1902-1903. The birth rate in that year was exceptionally high, and the figures for the year under review are about normal for tea gardens. The birth rate among tea-garden coolies compares unfavourably with the provincial birth rate, which was 35·57 on the total population and 125·0 on the total adult female population.

Birth rate.

District.	Number of births.	Birth rate per mille calculated on	
		Total coolie population.	Adult female population.
Cachar	3,079	25·9	83·4
Sylhet	4,485	31·8	101·7
Kamrup ...	105	31·7	102·7
Darrang ...	1,994	22·8	86·6
Nowgong ...	425	23·5	74·9
Sibsagar ...	4,921	32·7	109·4
Lakhimpur ...	3,907	26·3	83·6
Total for 1903-1904...	18,816	28·9	93·4
„ „ 1902-1903...	19,826	30·8	98·6

24. The registered rate of mortality for the total labour force was 24·0 per mille, against 25·4 per mille in 1902-1903. This satisfactory result is due to the healthiness of the year and to the comparatively small number of importations, the heaviest death rate being invariably amongst new coolies.

Death rate.

25. The mortality among adult tea-garden coolies according to nationality is indicated on the margin. There is an improvement in the death rate of coolies from all the recruiting districts, especially in the case of coolies from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas and from the Central Provinces, the ratios being 25·59 against 29·61, and 37·81 against 40·84, respectively. The death rate among coolies from the Central Provinces is, however, still very high, and may perhaps be ascribed to the change of diet which they experience in Assam, rice taking the place of the small millet (*kodon*) to which most of them are accustomed.

Mortality according to nationality.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	Deaths among adults of both classes.	Ratio per mille of deaths to strength.
1	2	3	4	5
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	Men ...	143,244	1,538	23·49
	Women.		1,826	
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men ...	166,773	1,933	25·59
	Women.		2,336	
Central Provinces	Men ...	63,351	1,104	37·81
	Women		1,303	
Madras	Men ...	12,810	184	27·48
	Women.		198	
Assam	Men ...	15,987	79	12·63
	Women.		123	
Others*	Men ...	158	1	6·33
	Women.		...	
Total	Men ...	200,238	4,809	24·01
	Women.	202,385	5,788	28·59
Grand total	...	402,623	10,597	26·32

* Includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

26. The death rate among Act-labourers decreased from 40·3 to 38·1. The most noticeable decreases were in Cachar, where the ratio was 33·3, against 43·6, and Nowgong, where it was 36·9, against 44·6 in the preceding year. In Sylhet, on the other hand, the ratio increased from 35·8 to 40·0, but it must be remembered that the number of Act-labourers in this district is small.

Statement No. VIII.—Death rate and causes of death among Act-labourers.

The marginal statement compares the mean strength of the total Act labour force and the number of deaths from different diseases in 1902-1903 and 1903-1904. The figures show a decrease under all diseases except those headed "Other causes." The diseases which were responsible for the heaviest death rates were, as usual, dysentery, anæmia, and diseases of the respiratory organs. The death rate from malarial fevers continued low.

	1902-1903.	1903-1904.
Mean strength ...	99,175	83,792
Deaths from:—		
Cholera	263	164
Diarrhœa	350	333
Dysentery	833	751
Malarial fever ...	354	287
Anæmia	699	537
Respiratory diseases ...	623	577
Other causes ...	764	695
Total	3,885	3,394

Deaths among non-Act labourers.

27. The death rate among non-Act labourers dropped from 25·2 per mille to 23·0 per mille, all districts except Sylhet and Nowgong showing a decrease. The increase in the former district was small, but in Nowgong the ratio rose from 25·6 to 31·4, a fact which it is difficult to explain in view of the great decrease in the Act death rate of the district. The increase in Nowgong occurred under all heads of disease, except dysentery and anæmia, but especially under "Other causes."

Death rate among children.

28. The death rate among children rose from 19·7 per thousand to 20·4. The heaviest death rate recorded was 33·1 per thousand in Kamrup, the chief cause of death being malarial fever.

Sick and destitute coolies.

29. The number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries fell from 930 to 766. A decrease is noticeable in all districts except Cachar, where an increase merely results from the amalgamation with the dispensaries of some special shelter houses that were maintained in that district. Of five shelter huts maintained in Sylhet, three were closed from the 1st August 1903. Seventy-eight persons, of whom 44 were ex-tea coolies and 34 railway coolies, were relieved in these shelters. The total expenditure incurred was Rs. 349-12-9.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

30. Gardens are classed as unhealthy if the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., the number of deaths from which the average is struck being not less than 10. The number of gardens on the unhealthy list for 1903-1904 was 5 out of a total of 781 gardens. This is an exceptionally satisfactory condition of affairs.

31. The following table shows the gardens classed as unhealthy in each district, together with the rate of mortality of that portion of the labour force in respect of which the garden was unhealthy:

District.	Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia, of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Darrang ...	Act population ...	Bhutiachang ...	242	18	74·4	...	2	5	1	2	3	5
Nowgong ...	Non-Act ,, ...	New Salona ...	502	38	75·5	...	...	2	16	7	6	7
Sibsagar ...	Act ,, ...	Hulwating ...	99	11	111·1	1	1	1	...	6	1	1
Lakhimpur ...	Act ,, ...	Nakhray ...	216	21	100·0	...	3	14	1	...	1	2
	Act ,, ...	Ledo	426	30	70·4	...	3	11	3	7	3	4

None of these gardens were on the unhealthy list in the previous year. In the case of three out of the five gardens the excess of mortality over 7 per cent. is small. The death rate shown against Hulwating garden is high, but it is calculated on a very small Act-population. The deaths on this garden were principally due to anæmia and anchylostomiasis. On Nakhray and Ledo gardens the high death rate amongst Act-coolies was principally due to dysentery. Since the close of the year a committee has been convened to consider the condition of the Nakhray garden.

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES AND PROSECUTIONS.

Statement IX.—Complaints by tea planters and garden coolies.

32. The number of complaints or petitions preferred to Magistrates by coolies against their employers rose from 666 to 792, but this increase was mainly due to the filing of a greater number of applications for discharge certificates. The instructions issued in February 1903 have encouraged coolies to resort to the Magistrate when they apprehend difficulty in obtaining from their employers certificates of discharge on completion of their agreements; and it is to be remarked that this result has been accompanied by a marked decrease in complaints of violence, intimidation, or oppressive

treatment in order to compel re-engagement, which have fallen from 112 to 24. In 18 of these latter cases orders were passed in favour of the complainants.

33. The number of cases returned of ill-treatment by managers unconnected with re-engagement was 103, as compared with 13 during the preceding year. But 70 of these cases arose out of a single incident in the Cachar district, the coolies of one estate having come to headquarters in a body to complain. A thorough enquiry was made into the state of affairs on the garden, the result of which showed that the management had been unsatisfactory, chiefly owing to the manager's ill-health, and that new Act-VI coolies had not in all cases received full pay for half tasks in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the Act, while in several cases sick coolies had not received the allowance to which they were entitled under section 130. These disclosures were made the subject of correspondence with the Agents of the garden.

In a serious case which occurred on a garden in the Darrang district, a coolie boy died from the effects of a beating believed to have been inflicted by some chaukidars of the estate. The boy was suspected of theft, and after some slaps and strokes with a cane had been administered to him by the manager and assistant manager, he was handed over to the chaukidars, evidently in order that they should get him to confess where the stolen property was concealed. His dead body was subsequently found with marks which showed that he had been most cruelly beaten, but no evidence was forthcoming against the perpetrators of the crime. The manager and assistant manager were convicted of simple assault and fined, respectively, Rs. 150 and Rs. 25.

34. Turning now to cases in which managers were the complainants, there was a decrease of serious crime. In 17 cases coolies were charged with rioting, violence, or intimidation, but only eight exhibited features of a serious character. In one of them a garden manager was slightly wounded with a *dao*. In another, both the manager and the assistant manager were forced to take refuge in their bungalows, though they were not actually assaulted, and the rioters prevented the other coolies from working for several days, and adopted a defiant attitude towards the Magistrate who made an enquiry on the garden. In a third case, the assistant manager, who seems to have been a new man and injudicious in his treatment of the coolies, was set upon and severely beaten by a mob of coolies, who left him unconscious. In a fourth case, a coolie boy was being treated in the garden hospital for convulsions. The father of the child objected to the treatment he was receiving and took the boy away by force. On the native doctor's complaining to the manager, the father of the boy was sent for and came accompanied by five of his friends, all armed with *lathis*. After some altercation, these persons combined to make an assault on the manager, who was only saved from serious injury by the intervention of the assistant manager and some coolies. In the fifth case, while the police were enquiring into a complaint of unlawful assembly, they were surrounded by a mob of coolies armed with *lathis*, who rescued the prisoners they had arrested and severely beat the manager when he tried to interfere. They subsequently broke into the native doctor's house and beat the head clerk of the garden, who had taken refuge there.

In the three other serious cases individual coolies were concerned. The European foreman of a colliery in Lakhimpur was killed by a newly-imported coolie with a pick axe. Enquiry elicited the fact that the coolie had been harshly treated by the deceased. The murderer was convicted under section 302, Indian Penal Code, and sentenced to death by the Sessions court, but this sentence was subsequently commuted to one of transportation for life by the High Court.

An assistant manager reprimanded and struck a coolie for being absent from work without leave. The brother of the coolie then began to create a disturbance in the lines, and shortly afterwards both the brothers assaulted the assistant manager with sticks, inflicting several injuries on him, one of which, a blow on the knee, was severe.

Lastly, a coolie without any known provocation first insulted and then attacked his manager with a hoe, partially stunning him.

35. Out of 460 cases of absence or desertion of Act labourers, 241, or 52 per cent., resulted in conviction. The percentage of convictions for similar offence under Act XIII was 48. In 277 cases, coolies were sentenced to imprisonment for desertion or refusal to work. Sixty-three of these cases were under Act XIII.

Statement X.—Desertions.

All the districts, except Cachar and Darrang, show a decrease in the number of desertions. The increase in Cachar is accounted for by the increase in the number of Act labourers, the percentage of desertions being slightly lower than in the preceding year. The same remark applies to the Darrang district. The general decrease in desertions is a natural result of the reduced importation of labour, as it is new coolies who most frequently abscond.

36. A case in which a ferryman illegally arrested and detained some coolies who were leaving a tea garden led to an enquiry regarding the practice of authorising ferrymen to arrest deserters under section 195 of Act VI of 1901, a result of which was that ferrymen not infrequently considered themselves justified in stopping persons of the coolie class who attempted to cross by their ferries, on the suspicion of their being deserters. The practice was attended with the risk of illegal arrest, as it is impossible for the average ferryman to distinguish labourers bound by contract under Act VI and liable to arrest without warrant, from those not so liable, and it is believed to have been amongst the causes which have rendered Assam so unpopular in the recruiting districts. After consulting District Officers, as well as the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts and the local branches of the Indian Tea Association, the Chief Commissioner came to the conclusion that the practice should be stopped. A rule has accordingly been framed prohibiting ferrymen from accepting authorisation to arrest deserters under Act VI of 1901, and a clause to the same effect will be inserted in future in ferry leases.

CHAPTER VII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Statement XI.—Inspections.

37. At the beginning of the year there were 788 gardens on the register. No new garden was opened. In Nowgong one garden and in Sylhet two gardens were closed, while in each of the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur two gardens were amalgamated with other gardens. The total number of gardens on the register at the close of the year was 781. Of these, 719 were liable to inspection as employing Act labourers or more than 50 non-Act labourers. Of the gardens liable to inspections, 711 were inspected during the year.

Statement XII.—Capitation fees.

38. The demand on account of capitation fees was Rs. 43,476, and a sum of Rs. 410-12 was outstanding from the previous year. Rupees 43,102-4 were collected during the year, leaving a balance of Rs. 667-8 to be realised.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers.

39. The relations between planters and the neighbouring villagers continued to be satisfactory.

Colonisation of ex-tea-garden coolies.

40. The area of Government land settled direct with time-expired coolies in the province increased from 106,003 acres to 111,706 acres. In addition to land held direct from Government, a good deal of land is held throughout the province by coolies as sub-tenants of raiyats or *mirasdars* or of the gardens on which they are employed. No details of area of these holdings are available.

Inland Labour Transport Fund.—Statement XIII.

41. The receipts of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam in the financial year 1903-1904 amounted to Rs. 72,382, against Rs. 72,700 in the preceding year, and the disbursements to Rs. 1,04,184, against Rs. 1,14,795. The decrease in expenditure is due to economies effected in the arrangements for the control of recruitment and the transport of emigrants in Bengal, and in Assam to the reduction of establishments at reception depôts, to the abolition of superfluous depôts and shelter huts for emigrants, and to the curtailment of the grants made from the fund to charitable dispensaries. Notwithstanding these economies, however, the total income of the fund, including the opening balance at the credit of the Assam portion of the fund, fell short of the expenditure by Rs. 7,189. An application has been made to the Government of India for sanction to adjust this debit balance by transfer from the credit balance of the Central Provinces portion, but further economies are required to restore the fund to equilibrium, and are under consideration.

42. A measure of much importance that was taken during the year was the deputation of Mr. J. C. Arbuthnott, C.I.E., to study the labour system that is followed by tea planters in the Duars, in Madras, and in Ceylon. Mr. Arbuthnott's report is an interesting and valuable contribution to the information that is possessed by Government on the labour question; and the contrast which he draws between conditions in Assam and those in the other tea-growing localities may lead to practical results of value. Copies of the report have been widely distributed amongst the planting community.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. J. MONAHAN,

Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

STATEMENTS.

STATEMENT I—PART A.—*Statistics of the adult coolies employed on the Tea Estates under Act VI of 1901 in the Province of Assam during the year 1903-1904.*

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1903-1904.							Deductions made during the year 1903-1904.													Number remaining at the end of the year 1903-1904.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Imported.		Otherwise than by importations.				Total of columns 2 and 9.	Transferred to other estates.	Deaths.	Desertions.	Cancelment under section 10.	Cancelments under sections 11, 119, 125(1), 153(1), 154 and 200.	Consignment for permanent confinues under section 131.	Cancelment under section 140(3).	Suspended under section 189.	Effux of time, section 155.	Redemption, section 156.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.				
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Number giving contracts under section 128.	Number giving contracts under section 131.	Received by transfer from other estates.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Total added.																
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Cachar	896	584	231	636	5	41	13	1,510	2,406	42	44	265	17	...	7	...	...	196	4	86	661	1,745	1,320	33·3
Sylhet	1,503	378	251	329	...	15	2	975	2,478	14	62	152	...	...	22	...	...	553	...	73	881	1,597	1,550	40·0
Total	2,399	962	482	965	5	56	15	2,485	4,884	56	106	417	17	...	34	...	...	749	4	159	1,542	3,342	2,870	36·9
Namrup	77	19	1	...	...	...	...	20	97	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	72	...	...	75	22	49	40·8
Darrang	18,491	898	1,053	1,565	5,590	119	20	9,245	27,736	119	730	581	7	...	30	...	...	7,316	13	85	8,881	18,855	18,673	39·0
Nowgong	5,101	169	248	522	693	97	5	1,734	6,835	100	175	92	...	...	4	...	...	2,067	...	22	2,460	4,375	4,738	36·9
Sibsagar	27,539	875	1,383	471	4,825	176	70	7,800	35,359	176	784	722	3	...	30	...	...	10,802	2	1,164	13,683	21,676	24,618	31·8
Lakhimpur	39,651	3,172	1,864	2,714	8,207	148	105	16,210	55,861	149	1,57	1,148	10	1	108	...	...	16,452	8	362	19,825	36,036	37,844	41·9
Brahmaputra Valley ...	90,879	5,133	4,549	5,272	19,315	540	200	35,009	125,888	544	3,2 8	2,543	20	1	173	...	...	36,709	23	1,633	44,924	80,964	85,922	38·2
Total for 1903-1904 ...	93,278	6,095	5,031	6,237	19,320	596	215	37,494	130,772	600	3,384	2,960	(a) 37	1	207	...	...	37,458	27	1,792	46,460	84,306	88,792	38·1
,, ,, 1902-1903 ...	90,071	6,088	7,088	4,374	15,019	817	276	34,862	133,631	849	2,885	3,062	47	1	221	...	...	30,366	14	1,910	40,355	93,278	96,175	40·3

(a) Four contracts cancelled under section 10 have not been shown in this statement against the district of Sylhet, as the coolies did not reach the garden of destination.

STATEMENT I—PART B.—Statistics of the adult coolies (working and not working) living in garden lines or garden bastis, but not employed under Act VI of 1901, and coolie children.

District.		Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1903-1904. Number imported during the year.	Number added locally during the year.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 5.	Deductions made during the year 1903-1904. Number lost by death during the year.	Number lost by transfer, discharge, or desertion during the year.	Number giving birth to children under Act VI.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1903-1904.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	Adults	70,657	735	5,216	5,951	76,608	1,611	4,530	639	6,770	69,838	70,267	22·7
	Children	47,146	201	3,839	4,110	51,256	815	3,063	....	3,878	47,378	47,763	17·8
Sylhet	Adults	81,282	1,337	8,077	9,414	90,696	1,563	7,010	329	9,102	81,502	81,899	22·7
	Children	57,450	511	6,014	6,825	64,251	1,132	4,903	...	6,035	58,216	57,526	19·5
Surma Valley	Adults	151,939	2,072	13,293	15,365	167,304	3,436	11,540	968	15,964	151,360	151,659	22·8
	Children	104,596	1,072	9,844	10,916	115,498	1,947	7,956	...	9,903	105,595	105,089	18·5
Kamrup	Adults	2,160	102	850	952	3,118	64	580	...	644	2,474	2,330	27·6
	Children	936	9	230	239	1,175	31	210	...	241	934	934	33·1
Darrang	Adults	29,996	678	11,093	11,777	41,773	815	4,845	6,180	11,840	29,933	29,965	27·2
	Children	25,391	573	2,468	2,983	28,374	602	1,819	...	2,439	25,935	25,663	24·1
Nowgong	Adults	6,961	234	3,402	3,636	10,597	230	1,918	771	2,919	7,678	7,319	31·4
	Children	6,419	84	535	619	7,038	125	506	...	631	6,407	6,013	20·8
Sibsagar	Adults	62,145	1,364	17,415	18,859	81,004	1,320	6,600	4,240	12,159	68,745	63,445	20·3
	Children	60,284	1,029	5,609	6,698	66,982	1,159	5,587	...	6,746	60,236	60,260	19·2
Lakhimpur	Adults	34,392	2,193	10,544	12,737	47,129	1,310	5,224	9,732	16,275	30,854	57,123	23·0
	Children	52,828	1,624	4,508	6,132	58,960	1,803	3,668	...	4,031	54,929	53,439	23·6
Brahmaputra Valley	Adults	135,660	4,571	52,190	56,761	212,621	3,757	19,257	20,923	43,937	168,684	162,172	23·2
	Children	145,458	3,321	13,370	16,691	162,149	3,198	11,730	...	14,928	147,161	146,309	21·8
Total	Adults	307,619	6,943	65,683	72,326	379,945	7,313	30,797	21,891	59,901	320,044	312,831	23·0
	Children	250,040	4,913	23,214	27,607	277,647	5,145	19,726	...	24,851	252,796	251,398	20·4
Grand total		557,659	11,856	88,897	99,933	657,592	12,458	50,523	21,891	84,752	572,800	564,229	21·8
Total for 1902-1903		538,082	12,606	83,993	96,511	634,593	12,691	46,516	15,997	70,934	563,659	547,870	23·8

STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.	Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to total labour force.	Percentage of column 10 to total labour force.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Plains United Provinces and Bengal	9,809	8,433	18,242	59,101	66,560	125,661	68,910	74,993	143,903	52·11	35·59
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas	22,787	19,608	42,395	59,733	64,866	124,599	82,520	84,474	166,994	30·58	41·30
Central Provinces	10,319	9,243	19,562	20,579	22,715	43,294	30,898	31,958	62,856	30·84	15·55
Madras	1,578	1,319	2,897	4,588	5,280	10,168	6,466	6,599	13,065	30·50	3·23
Assam	893	557	1,189	12,105	4,951	16,168	12,728	4,620	17,348	26·63	4·29
Others*	25	5	30	59	65	124	114	70	184	38·04	·04
Total of 1903-1904	45,141	39,165	84,306	156,465	163,549	320,044	201,636	202,714	404,350	50·13	100·00
„ „ 1902-1903	49,737	43,541	93,278	149,105	158,514	307,619	198,842	202,055	400,897	50·40	100·00

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

Nationality.	Imported by garden sardar.			Imported by contractors.			Total Act.			Total non-Act.			Total Act and non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal	594	481	1,075	1,630	1,027	2,657	2,224	1,508	3,732	1,350	1,292	2,642	3,574	2,774	6,348
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas	1,387	1,198	2,585	1,115	687	1,802	2,502	1,885	4,387	1,128	918	2,046	3,630	2,883	6,513
Central Provinces	365	536	1,001	857	521	1,378	1,222	1,151	2,473	756	774	1,530	1,978	1,925	3,903
Madras	125	148	273	132	114	246	257	262	519	152	150	302	409	412	821
Assam	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	82	72	154	82	...	82
Others*	3	...	3	11	1	12	14	1	15	1	...	1	15	1	16
Total of 1903-1904	2,674	2,357	5,031	3,745	2,350	6,095	6,419	4,707	11,126	3,469	3,144	6,613	9,888	7,851	17,739
„ „ 1902-1903	4,236	3,752	7,988	3,849	2,239	6,088	8,085	5,991	14,076	3,042	3,021	6,063	11,127	9,013	20,139

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT IV.—Recruitment of Act Labourers.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.	Number of certificates produced by garden sardars for examination of labourers.	Number of sardari coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under the Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts.		
							Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cachar	400	175	231	0·5	584	815	584	231	815
Sylhet	544(a)	403	251	0·4	378	629	378	251	629
Total Surma Valley	944	578	482	0·5	962	1,444	962	482	1,444
Kamrup	2	2	1	0·5	19	20	19	1	20
Darrang	1,578	1,130	1,053	0·6	898	1,951	4 898	1,053	1,951
Nowgong	275(b)	206	248	0·9	169	417	169	248	417
Sibsagar	1,750	1,404	1,383	0·7	875	2,258	875	1,383	2,258
Lakhimpur	2,536	1,890	1,864	0·7	3,172	5,036	3,172	1,864	5,036
Total Assam Valley	6,141	4,632	4,549	0·7	5,133	9,682	5,133	4,549	9,682
Total of 1903-1904	7,085	5,210	5,031	0·7	6,095	11,126	6,095	5,031	11,126
,, ,, 1902-1903	6,097	4,291	7,988	1·3	6,088	14,076	6,088	7,988	14,076

(*a*) This includes 7 permits, granted to specially employed garden sardars under section 90
(*b*) This includes 5 ditto ditto ditto.

STATEMENT V.—Debarkation Depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	through	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.		
			Number who passed depôts.	Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	1	1,811	1,774	...	3	...	1,771	...	986 0 0	678 10 3	1,664 10 3
Sylhet	2	2,777	2,412	5	...	...	399	4	593 5 0	739 0 0	1,332 5 0
Kamrup	1	131	1,426	...	...	...	54	...	296 7 3	469 1 3	765 8 6
Darrang	1	3,204	1,792	...	2	...	1,085	...	258 12 10	1,593 4 11	1,852 1 9
Nowgong	1	735	910	122	6	13	148	...	486 11 3	540 6 4	1,027 1 7
Sibsagar	3	4,651	4,885	366	30	...	2,843	...	772 14 5	3,038 1 2	3,810 15 7
Lakhimpur	1	8,853	8,073	2,148	33	...	5,693	...	202 1 0	1,665 11 10	1,867 12 10
Total of 1903-1904 ...	10	22,162	21,272	2,641	74	13	11,992	4	3,596 3 9	8,724 3 9	12,320 7 6
,, ,, 1902-1903 ...	18	26,684	26,684	3,447	158	314	13,170	...	5,441 5 10	12,847 3 7	18,288 9 5

STATEMENT VI.—Fraudulent and irregular Recruitment.

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	3	5	7	...	...	1	7	17
Sylhet	...	4	4	...	...	...	4	4
Kamrup	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	1
Darrang	4	9	9	...	1	3	10	18
Nowgong	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	...	15	7	6	2	...	15	26
Lakhimpur	...	30	14	10	2	4	26	45
Total of 1903-1904 ...	7	64	42	16	5	8	63	121
,, ,, 1902-1903 ...	5	48	31	10	5	7	46	78

STATEMENT VII.—Repatriation of Labourers.

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated.					
		Under section 12 (section 10 or 11).	Under section 158 (section 151).	Under section 159.	Under section 160 (section 159 or 160).	Under section 161.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	57	17	2	35	...	1	55
Sylhet	31	4	14	...	...	...	18
Kamrup	1	...	...	...	...	1	1
Darrang	42	7	12	3	...	2	24
Nowgong	4	...	3	...	...	...	3
Sibsagar	36	3	18	...	...	3	24
Lakhimpur	168	10	106	32	...	17	165
Total of 1903-1904	339	41	155	70	...	24	290
,, ,, 1902-1903	292	42	103	28	...	3	176

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.						Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.		
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the garden or in the district.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 159.	Under section 161.	Total.
1	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
							Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	2	...	...	...	2	373 8 0	...	373 8 0
Sylhet	...	13	...	...	...	13	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	17	1	...	...	...	18	146 12 9	...	146 12 9
Nowgong	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Sibsagar	11	1	...	...	...	12	...	13 7 6	13 7 6
Lakhimpur	1	1	1	...	...	3	594 4 6	59 10 0	653 14 6
Total of 1903-1904	...	45	3	1	...	49	1,114 9 3	73 1 6	1,187 13 9
,, ,, 1902-1903	...	110	...	6	...	116	697 0 9	66 11 0	763 11 9

STATEMENT VIII.—Deaths among all Classes of Labourers.

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of cooties or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar ...	Act	1,320	4	10	4	8	8	4	6	44	33·3
	Non-Act adults ...	70,267	108	97	125	259	242	220	550	1,601	22·7
	Children ...	47,263	50	215	120	180	25	80	145	815	17·2
	Total adults ...	71,587	112	107	129	267	250	224	556	1,645	22·9
Sylhet ...	Act	1,550	5	11	11	3	8	...	24	62	40·0
	Non-Act adults ..	81,392	95	242	222	231	282	32	751	1,855	22·7
	Children	57,826	17	143	108	386	72	20	384	1,132	19·5
	Total adults ...	82,942	100	253	233	234	290	32	775	1,917	23·1
Kamrup ...	Act	49	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2	40·8
	Non-Act adults ...	2,320	...	3	9	25	8	3	16	64	27·6
	Children... ...	934	...	1	1	17	2	...	10	31	33·2
	Total adults ...	2,369	...	3	9	25	9	3	17	66	27·8
Darrang ...	Act	18,673	31	50	136	63	176	123	151	730	39·0
	Non-Act adults ...	29,965	48	81	65	141	133	173	172	815	27·2
	Children... ...	25,663	8	48	118	159	59	59	169	620	24·1
	Total adults ...	48,638	79	131	201	204	311	296	323	1,545	31·7
Nowgong ...	Act	4,738	10	5	18	46	37	10	49	175	36·9
	Non-Act adults ...	7,319	10	15	13	82	33	19	58	230	31·4
	Children... ...	6,013	3	4	17	58	12	1	30	125	20·8
	Total adults ...	12,057	20	20	31	128	70	29	107	405	33·5
Sibsagar ...	Act	24,618	69	81	183	44	77	124	206	784	31·8
	Non-Act adults ...	65,445	110	132	186	85	152	146	518	1,329	20·3
	Children... ...	60,260	23	74	247	222	59	119	415	1,159	19·2
	Total adults ...	90,063	179	213	369	129	229	270	724	2,113	23·4
Lakhimpur ...	Act	37,844	45	176	399	123	280	316	248	1,587	41·9
	Non-Act adults ...	57,123	82	133	223	85	205	290	299	1,319	23·0
	Children... ...	53,439	20	99	240	276	112	145	371	1,263	23·6
	Total adults ...	94,967	127	311	622	208	485	606	547	2,906	30·6
Grand total ...	Act	88,792	164	333	751	287	587	577	685	3,384	38·1
	Non-Act adults ...	313,831	453	705	845	908	1,057	883	2,364	7,613	23·0
	Children... ...	251,398	121	586	851	1,298	341	424	1,524	5,145	20·4
	Total adults ...	402,623	617	1,038	1,596	1,195	1,644	1,460	3,049	10,997	26·3
	Total Labour force ...	654,021	738	1,624	2,445	2,493	1,985	1,884	4,573	15,742	24·0

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by Garden Coolies and by Tea Planters.

	By coolies against Managers.				By Managers against coolies.					
	Violence, intimidation or objective treatment with reference to the engagement.	Violence, intimidation or other illegal means to compel recognition.	Applications for discharge certificates.	Others.	Non-fulfilment of contract (by absence, desertion, etc.).	For failure of parties bailed to return to duty.	For enticing away.	Unlawful custody or restraint.	Assault or intimidation.	Others.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number of complaints or petitions received during the year.	103	24	581	82	1,107	73	33	12	4	49
Number of complaints or petitions pending from the previous year.	1	3	18	5	96	4	4	1	...	...
Total	104	27	599	87	1,203	77	37	13	4	49
Number dealt with criminally and decided—										
For complainant	1	...	...	5	6	...	...	12	4	12
Against complainant	...	1	...	25	22	3	5	1	...	15
Number of persons fined	1	...	...	4	...	3	...	...	...	...
" " imprisoned	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	70	7*	7
Number dealt with under Act VI of 1901 and decided—										
For complainant	...	...	91	10	241	8	16	...	...	3
Against complainant	...	2	72	2	259	62	16	...	...	4
Number of persons fined	...	...	...	2	2	2	2	...	...	...
" " imprisoned	...	...	...	...	224	4	13	...	...	2
Number dealt with under Act XIII of 1859 and decided—										
For complainant	...	...	19	...	274	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	3	...	14	1	291	...	...	...	...	...
Number of persons imprisoned ...	...	...	...	...	63	...	...	...	...	...
Number dealt with executively and decided—										
For complainant	67	18	256	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	32	4	133	28	...	...	...	...	...	...

* Includes one person who was transported for life.

STATEMENT X.—Statement of Desertions among Adult Labourers under Act VI.

Subdivision.		Number of desertions.	Percentage of desertions on mean strength.	Number of warrants issued for the arrest of deserters.	Number arrested.	Number convicted.	Number punished with imprisonment.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar ...	Sadr	256	21·38	27	22	21	16
	Hailakandi	9	7·31	3	3	3	3
	North Sylhet	25	13·92	12	5	5	5
Sylhet ...	Karimganj	37	9·73	6	15*	15	15
	South Sylhet	77	9·39	1	1	1	1
	Habiganj	13	7·62	1	97	1	1
Kamrup ...	Sadr	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Sadr	487	3·09	150	68	59	33
Darrang ...	Mangaldai	94	3·22	1	1	1	1
Nowgong ...	Sadr	92	1·94	24	49	36	36
	Sadr	338	2·38	12	10	14	14
Sibsagar ...	Jorhat	281	3·80	34	26	12	12
	Golaghat	103	3·67	25	14	12	12
	Sadr	1,033	3·14	58	60	57	56
Lakhimpur ...	North Lakhimpur ...	115	2·29	24	32	13	10
Total of 1903-1904		2,960	3·33	378	315	248	215
" " 1902-1903		3,062	3·18	417	297	271	222

* Arrested by Manager without warrant.

† By warrant 1, by Manager 6, and by police 2.

STATEMENT XI.—Inspections.

District.	Number of gardens employing Act labour.	Number of non-Act gardens employing more than 50 labourers.	Total number of gardens liable to inspection.	Number inspected once.	Number inspected twice.	Number inspected thrice.	Number inspected four times.	Total inspected.	Number of inspections made by Deputy Commissioner.	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioner.	Number of inspections made by Civil Surgeon.	Number of inspections made by other agencies.	Total number of inspections made.	Number of gardens which submitted returns.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	58	127	185	180	1	...	...	181	124	22	16	20	182	185
Sylhet	53	70	123	122	1	...	...	123	13	108	2	1	124	124
Kamrup	2	12	14	14	...	...	...	14	13	...	1	...	14	15
Darrang	72	14	86	78	5	...	...	83	31	22	15	20	88	87
Nowgong	30	5	35*	32	2	...	...	34	21*	...	13	2	36	36
Sibsagar	119	30	149	147	2	...	...	149	24	101	5	21	151	149
Lakhimpur	117	10	127	123	4	...	...	127	55	12	14	50	131	128
Total of 1903-1904	451	268	719	696	15	...	...	711	281	285	66	114	746	724
,, ,, 1902-1903	470	264	734	688	20	2	...	710	241	295	69	129	734	743

* One closed during the year.

STATEMENT XII.—Demand and Collection of Capitation Fees under section 117.

District.	Demand for the year.		Arrears from previous year outstanding.	Gross demand.	Total realised.	Balance outstanding.
	Number of labourers for whom fee is payable.	Total demand.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	2,002	500 8 0	2 0 0	502 8 0	486 0 0	16 8 0
Sylhet	3,158	789 8 0	375 12 0	1,165 4 0	766 0 0	399 4 0
Kamrup	95	23 12 0	19 4 0	43 0 0	37 8 0	5 8 0‖
Darrang	37,135	9,283 12 0	...	9,283 12 0	9,173 4 0†	...
Nowgong	10,089	2,522 4 0	...	2,522 4 0‡	2,508 0 0	...
Sibsagar	46,376	11,594 0 0	13 12 0	11,607 12 0	11,369 4 0§	246 4 0‖
Lakhimpur	75,049	18,762 4 0	...	18,762 4 0	18,762 4 0	...
Total	173,904	43,476 0 0	410 12 0	43,886 12 0	43,102 4 0	667 8 0

* The figures in this column represent the number of labourers on which the fee for the half-year was payable.

† Rupees 117 paid in excess by 3 gardens in 1902-03 was carried over to the account of 1903-04 and Rs. 6-8 was paid in excess by two gardens.

Out of this amount a sum of Rs. 14-4 was realized during 1902-03 in advance.

§ This includes Rs. 7-12 paid in excess.

‖ Since realised.

STATEMENT XIII.—Showing the Receipts and Expenditure of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1903-1904.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
Heads.	figures.	figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Contractors' license fees under section 25 ...	...	2,033 0 0	2,033 0 0	Salaries of depôt establishment, including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, allowances to Hospital Assistants, compounders, dressers, clerks, servants, travelling allowance and compensation for dearness of provisions.	8,589 0 9	4,554 12 0	13,143 12 9
Recruiters' license fees under section 26- ...	...	4,450 0 0	4,450 0 0				
Registration fees under sections 38 and 72 ...	...	8,902 12 6	8,902 12 6				
Rates under section 127...	44,811 0 0	800 10 0	45,611 10 0	Supplies and services, including expenses during the prevalence of epidemics and miscellaneous under grants for medical purposes and diet of patients, clothing and bedding, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty construction and repairs, postage charges, telegrams, purchase and repair of furniture, rents, rates, and taxes and miscellaneous under Hospital and Dispensaries, contingent charges.	14,941 5 1	893 9 5	15,834 14 6
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	4,809 12 6	...	4,809 12 6	Grants to dispensaries ...	4,660 0 0	...	4,660 0 0
Medical examination fees	550 0 0	...	550 0 0	Salaries under 26.—Scientific, etc., including Inspectors, Travelling Inspectors of Immigrants, Emigration Agents and Assistant Surgeons, etc.	4,442 8 5	27,679 1 6	32,106 9 11
				Clerks and servants ...	8,997 13 0	6,098 8 2	15,096 5 2
Diet, etc., charges recovered	2,070 6 4	...	2,070 6 4	Travelling allowance ...	6,454 0 0	2,950 4 6	9,404 5 0
Fees for licenses of inland steamers and native boats under section 90.	...	1,294 4 0	1,294 4 0	Allowances for registering coolies.	...	582 2 7	582 2 7
Fines	...	238 0 0	238 0 0	House rent allowance ...	23 9 6	...	23 9 6
Miscellaneous ...	...	69 3 9	69 3 0	Fees for inspecting tea gardens.	1,672 0 0	...	1,672 0 0
Advances	806 11 4	...	806 11 4	Miscellaneous, including medical examination charges, postage, telegrams, printing and stationery, share cost of controlling and accounts office, miscellaneous under "contingencies" (36—scientific, etc.), printing at private presses under 30.—Stationery and barrel charges of paupers, charges for relief of distress, cost of repatriating invalided labourers and petty construction and repairs under 32.—Miscellaneous and pension under 29—Superannuation.	6,213 12 11	3,276 13 10	9,490 10 9
				Refunds...	10 12 0	64 8 5	75 2 5
				Contribution on account of treasury establishment.	...	176 11 2	176 11 2
				Advances	618 0 0	50 0 0	668 0 0
				Deficiencies (*i.e.*, excess of payments over receipts transferred from Bengal).	25,895 6 4	—25,895 6 4	...
Total	54,721 9 2	17,669 14 3	72,391 7 5	Total	86,464 4 6	27,669 14 3	1,06,134 2 9
Opening balance ...	24,262 12 6	...	24,262 12 6	Closing balance	—7,189 14 10	...	—7,189 14 10
Grand total	78,974 5 8	17,669 14 3	96,644 3 11	Grand total	78,274 5 8	27,669 14 3	1,06,644 2 11

SHILLONG: Printed and published by E. HILL, Press Superintendent, Assam, at the Secretariat Printing Office: (Rev.) No. 491—280—12-11-1904.

RESOLUTION

ON

IMMIGRANT LABOUR IN ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1904-1905.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.

1905.

Price 1*s.* 6*d.*] [*Price One Rupee.*

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SHILLONG:
PRINTED BY E. HILL, PRESS SUPERINTENDENT, ASSAM.

[Price 1d maximum (with postage)]

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COOLIE ROUTES FOR THE BRAHMAPUTRA & SURMA VALLEYS.
(1) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, and thence by steamer.
(2) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, thence by steamer to Gauhati, and thence by rail.
(3) By rail from Chandpur.
(4) By steamer or country boat from Goalundo.
PORTS OF INSPECTION
DHUBRI.
HARIBHÁNGA.
TEZPUR.
DIBRUGARH.
KARIMGANJ.
RIVER DEBARKATION DEPOTS.
1. KARIMGANJ
2. FENCHUGANJ
3. TEZPUR
4. SILCHAR
5. SHIBSAGAR
6. KACHUGAON
7. DIBRUGARH
8. DHUBRI
RAILWAY DEBARKATION DEPOT
GAUHATI.
LANDING-PLACES NOT BEING DEPOTS
1. BALIPARA
2. KATLICHARA
3. MANGALDAI
4. MAIBONG HAT
5. HAFLONG
6. PALASHBARI
7. HAILAKANDI GHAT
8. KOSHBAT
9. DHOWAKHOLA
10. DHARAMPUR
11. GOBINDGANJ
12. DHARMANAGAR
13. KAMALASAGAR
14. DHARMNAGAR
15. DHARMNAGAR
COOLIE REST-HOUSES
SILCHAR.
JATINGAMUKH.
JIRIGHAT.
PARTABGARH.
TITABAR.
SIBSAGAR.
KHERIAN.
90°
92°
26°
24°
PEMAKOH
GOALPARA
GAUHATI
SILCHAR
DIBRUGARH
SIBSAGAR
NAGAMATI
KOHIMA
B R A H M A P U T R A
B A R A K
B E N G A L
A S S A M
M A N I P U R

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MANIPUR
Map of
ASSAM
TO ILLUSTRATE THE
IMMIGRATION REPORT
REFERENCES.

Resolution on Immigrant Labour in Assam for the year 1904-1905.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, in the Financial Department, No. 371F., dated Shillong, the 30th October 1905.

Read—

The Immigrant Labour Reports of the Deputy Commissioners of Labour Districts.

RESOLUTION.

THE immigrant labour dealt with in the annual reports to which this Resolution refers is labour imported for employment on tea gardens, in the oil refinery at Digboi, in coal mines, and in a few saw-mills in Upper Assam. Labourers employed on railways, and those who migrate to the province during the cold weather for temporary employment returning to their homes in April or May, are not included.

Statistics of the labour force.

2. Statement I indicates the changes which took place during the year in the labour force of the province. The total strength at the close of the year was 664,296, being 7,190 more than at the close of the year preceding. The number of adults increased by 5,815.

There was a small recovery in the importation of fresh labour. But the most noticeable feature of the year was the very marked development of unindentured immigration. During the preceding year adults imported without contract formed only a third of the whole. During the year under report the proportion rose to 62 per cent.

There was accordingly a further decline (of 4,323) in the number of labourers employed under Act VI, while the number of those whose service was not regulated by this Act increased by 10,138.

Distribution of the labour force.

3. The Assam Valley employs 60·89 per cent., and the Surma Valley 39·11 per cent. of the total labour force. Most of the Act labourers are employed in the Assam Valley, Act labourers in the Surma Valley forming an insignificant proportion of the labour force of that valley.

At present, less than a fifth of the adult labour force of the province is indentured under Act VI.

Nationality and sex of the adult labour force.

4. Statement II shows the nationality and sex of the adult labour force. The distribution of the labour force among the different nationalities and the proportion of the sexes among both Act and non-Act labourers remains very much the same as in the preceding year. While the sexes are almost equally divided in the total adult labour force, women among the Act and men among the non-Act labourers are in the minority. Children form 38·2 per cent. of the total labour force.

Labour force and acreage under tea.

5. The preceding year's decrease in the area under tea cultivation from 338,278 acres to 337,821 acres was converted, by the maturing of young plants, into an increase in the actual tea-bearing area of 1,000 acres.

The number of adult labourers per 100 acres of tea rose from 119 to 121, the averages in the Surma Valley and Assam Valley being 118 and 123, respectively. But these figures are still considerably below the actual requirements, and it appears that in the conditions under which labour is managed in Assam, leave cannot be liberally granted until the adult labour force is very materially larger than it is at present.

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

Provincial figures of immigration.

6. Coolie immigration into the province has been as follows during the past five years :—

Class of labourers.	1900.	1901.	1902-1903.	1903-1904.	1904-1905.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act { Sardari adults	16,728	8,102	7,988	5,031	4,196
Act { Contractors' adults	13,241	6,147	6,088	6,095	2,868
Non-Act adults	15,075	5,938	6,123	6,643	11,986
Total of Act and non-Act adults	45,044	19,887	20,199	17,769	19,050
Children	17,689	6,336	6,485	4,393	5,159
Grand total	62,733	20,223	26,684	22,162	24,209

7. Immigration has increased, but to no very great extent, and labour is still exceedingly scarce. The number (709) of labourers imported under the Act to the Surma Valley was insignificant, and it is clear that its withdrawal from the districts of Cachar and Sylhet could hardly prejudice recruitment, while it might facilitate recruitment materially. As already remarked, the most significant feature of the recruitment statistics of the year is the marked increase in the number of coolies (and especially in the number of contractors' coolies) who arrive in Assam without Act contracts. The restrictions on Act recruitments continue to be the subject of general complaint, and it is reported that sardars are learning to evade them.

The number of certificates granted to sardars fell from 7,085 to 6,272 and the number of recruits per sardar from 0·7 to 0·6. But these figures are not altogether a fair indication of the effectiveness of sardari agency, as they leave out of account the unindentured coolies recruited by them.

8. During the year, the Government of Bengal and the Administration of the Central Provinces consented to many important changes in the depôt and transit rules, with the removal of restrictions which have hitherto placed sardari on much the same footing as arkati recruitment, and have impeded the engagement of coolies by sardari agency. In future sardars and their coolies will be able practically to travel as ordinary third-class passengers and will be freed from all obligations to enter depôts. Another change of importance effected was a revision of the arrangements for dieting coolie immigrants travelling by the Assam-Bengal Railway from Chandpur to stations in Assam. Instead of providing cooked meals at Chandpur, Badarpur, Lumding, and Tinsukia, facilities for cooking will be provided at Lumding and suitable dry food at other stations. It is hoped that these arrangements will tend to lessen the prejudice which now exists against a journey to Assam, and the Government is indebted to the Agent of the Assam-Bengal Railway for the promptitude with which they have been introduced.

9. There was an increase in the total number of immigrants from the plains districts of the United Provinces and Bengal, and from Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas, but the increase was entirely with non-Act coolies, those imported under the Act showing in both cases a decrease.

Statement III.—Nationality and sex of adult immigrants and agency by which recruited.

10. The number of deaths which occurred during the journey to Assam was happily insignificant. There were only 16 deaths, the same number as in the previous year. Of these, eight were due to cholera. No deaths occurred at Dhubri.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra.

11. Coolies travelling to the Brahmaputra Valley made use of one of the two railway routes *viâ* Dhubri or *viâ* Chandpur and Tinsukia. Most of the immigrants to the Surma Valley travelled by the Assam-Bengal Railway. Of 3,056 coolies imported into Sylhet, only 882 passed through the river depôts, while out of 1,816 coolies travelling to Cachar 1,008 were imported by railway, and 808 by steamer. Palasbari and Dehingmukh were declared ports of debarkation during the year.

Transit of immigrants to the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys.

12. The depôt at Silchar was closed during the year. The number of cases in which coolies were detained for want of a guide decreased from 2,641 to 1,670.

Statement V.—Debarkation depôts.

13. The number of complaints of fraudulent recruitment rose from 64 to 75. Lakhimpur still shows the greatest number of cases, *i.e.*, 30. In twenty cases the coolies concerned were repatriated, on the ground of fraud or irregularity, at the expense of the gardens concerned.

Statement VI.—Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.

Of the 75 cases, fraud or irregularity was proved in 40.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

14. There was a considerable reduction in the number of contracts under Act VI which were entered into in the recruiting districts. The number of local contracts under section 121 remained almost the same as last year, while there was a slight increase in local contracts under section 118. The following statement furnishes statistics for the past two years:—

Number of contracts made.

	1903-1904.	1904-1905.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
1	2	3	4
Contracts—			
in the actual labour districts under section 118 of the Act ...	6,237	7,112	+14·03
in the actual labour districts under section 121 of the Act ...	19,320	19,329	...
in the recruiting districts	11,126	7,064	—36·50
Total	36,683	33,505	— 8·66

15. The total number of contracts under section 118 which required verification was 8,685, and the number verified was 6,532, against 7,911 and 4,984, respectively, in the previous year. The unverified contracts were mostly executed after the date on which the garden was inspected, and a second inspection for the purpose could not always be arranged.

Verification of contracts.			
District.		Total for verification.	Total verified.
Cachar		1,527	640
Sylhet		107	38
Kamrup		...	...
Darrang		1,692	1,187
Nowgong		1,135	941
Sibsagar		1,028	794
Lakhimpur		3,196	3,032
Total		8,685	6,532

Expiry and cancelment.

16. Contracts cancelled by efflux of time have, as a rule, been properly reported.

There were only 21 contracts cancelled under section 10. Of these, 10 were of women who had come to the province unaccompanied by husbands or guardians. Of the coolies whose contracts were cancelled, 20 were repatriated.

One hundred and ninety-three contracts were cancelled under section 131 for permanent incapacity to labour.

17. The number of contracts redeemed rose from 27 to 31, and the number of those cancelled by mutual consent decreased from 1,792 to 1,062. In the Sibsagar district 641 contracts were so cancelled, chiefly with a view to renewal under Act XIII, which is considered by some managers to be a more convenient basis of indenture than Act VI.

In the Nowgong district 57 contracts were endorsed under section 130 on account of absence from sickness, and 265 contracts were endorsed under section 192 for absence without reasonable excuse. In Sibsagar several managers submit lists of absent days merely as a precaution. Endorsements were actually applied for in very few cases.

18. Of the 268 coolies who were given the option of repatriation, 112 preferred to remain on the garden or in the labour district, 150 electing to be sent to their homes. The cost of repatriation debitable to the Inland Labour Transport Fund was only Rs. 423-5-9, against Rs. 1,187-10-9 in the previous year.

Statement VII.—Repatriation of coolies.

Working of Act XIII of 1859.

19. Act XIII continues to work smoothly and to be largely used, both in the written and oral form of agreement. One of the few gardens in Sylhet that experimented with local agreements under Act VI, and the one concern in Cachar that for some years has made use of contracts under section 118, are reported to be reverting to the general practice of the Surma Valley.

In the Darrang district, where alone the working of Act XIII has in the past been attended with some friction, the Act is now reported on the whole to be working well. The number of cases under the Act in this district which it was necessary to decide during the year has decreased from 137 to 71, and the number of coolies imprisoned from 37 to 11.

Wages.

20. It was remarked last year that the new form of return of wages was designed to show wages paid to coolies who actually turned out to work, but that, as the preparation of the return had not always been understood in tea gardens, the statistics compiled could not be accepted. This return was compiled monthly, and its preparation entailed a very great amount of clerical work.

The question of simplifying the return and of increasing its accuracy has been under consideration, and since the close of the year it has been decided that information sufficient for all purposes and of a more reliable character would be obtained were the return prescribed for two typical months of the year. At the request of the Indian Tea Association the months of March and September have been fixed for this purpose. A new form of return has been adopted, which, while materially simpler than that now in use, provides for the calculation of the wage averages upon working coolies and not upon the whole nominal labour force, irrespective of whether its members turn out to work or not.

Wages of Act labourers.

21. The following figures, showing the average monthly wage earnings of Act coolies, have been abstracted from the monthly wage returns submitted by planters during the year:—

Subdivision.	Average monthly cash wages, including allowances paid under sections 128 (1) and 130 (1), value of diet in lieu of such allowances, and of rations provided under section 131 (a) and also including *ticca* earnings.		Monthly average of payments made as bonus.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	5 2 2	4 2 10	0 4 6	0 4 11
Hailakandi	4 0 5	3 6 11	...	...
North Sylhet	4 4 8	3 1 2	...	...
Karimganj	4 10 6	3 15 5	0 0 10	0 0 10
South Sylhet	4 4 10	3 8 10	0 0 6	0 0 1
Habiganj	4 12 3	3 10 7	0 0 3	0 0 2
Kamrup	3 10 6	2 9 4	...	...
Darrang Sadr	4 7 1	3 14 3	0 10 6	0 7 11
Mangaldai	4 13 11	3 14 3	0 2 7	0 2 0
Nowgong	4 10 0	4 1 2	0 9 1	0 8 8
Sibsagar Sadr	5 2 1	4 1 7	0 8 9	0 4 4
Jorhat	4 6 1	3 9 1	0 7 1	0 1 8
Golaghat	4 12 1	3 14 6	0 1 3	0 0 9
Lakhimpur Sadr	5 7 10	4 8 8	0 9 7	0 5 6
North Lakhimpur	4 8 0	3 8 0	0 10 0	0 8 5
Average	4 15 6	4 2 0	0 8 8	0 5 6

The average wage of an Act coolie, both male and female, was practically the same as in the previous year. In Cachar sadr the average rose, while in Hailakandi it fell, a decline which is attributed by the Deputy Commissioner to the importation of new Act coolies whose wage-earning capacities are not as great as those of seasoned hands. But in this district, and also in Sylhet and Kamrup, the number of Act coolies is so small that

it is impossible to draw any conclusions from their pay returns. The wages of male Act coolies fell in Nowgong and rose in Golaghat, but there was little variation in those portions of the province where the bulk of this class of labour is employed.

Wages of non-Act labourers.

22. The following figures show the average monthly earnings of non-Act labourers:—

Subdivision.	Average monthly cash wage, including *rices*, subsistence allowances and value of diet or rations provided in lieu of wages or subsistence allowance.			Monthly average of payments made as bonus.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	4 14 0	3 5 1	2 8 4	0 6 0	0 4 1	0 1 1
Hailakandi	4 7 6	3 8 2	2 3 7	0 3 9	0 3 2	0 1 1
North Sylhet	4 9 9	2 9 5	2 1 0	0 7 4	0 5 0	...
Karimganj	4 7 3	3 3 6	2 9 3	0 3 3	0 2 5	0 0 8
South Sylhet	4 7 9	2 15 4	1 14 10	0 8 0	0 6 5	0 0 6
Habiganj	4 12 10	3 10 7	2 12 3	0 7 2	0 4 9	0 0 10
Kamrup	5 1 11	3 0 0	1 15 5	0 0 2	...	...
Darrang Sadr	4 11 1	3 5 6	2 3 9	0 8 2	0 7 6	0 0 11
Mangaldai	5 5 9	3 5 8	2 2 8	0 0 1	0 0 1	...
Nowgong	4 14 1	3 10 8	2 6 9	0 5 0	0 4 5	0 0 11
Sibsagar Sadr	4 15 2	3 9 9	2 7 5	0 9 8	0 7 4	0 0 10
Jorhat	4 9 3	3 1 11	2 5 2	0 8 11	0 5 9	0 1 11
Golaghat	4 15 9	3 3 0	1 15 10	0 11 6	0 6 1	0 1 1
Lakhimpur Sadr	5 15 7	4 6 4	2 14 3	0 9 5	0 8 3	0 1 6
North Lakhimpur	5 3 5	3 5 6	2 2 5	0 4 8	0 4 9	...
Average	4 15 9	3 7 6	2 6 7	0 7 4	0 5 8	0 1 1

The average wage earned by non-Act men is a little higher than that returned in the preceding year, and slightly exceeded the average earned by coolies under the Act. Non-Act women are generally very ready to take leave, and this fact is clearly reflected in the wage return. Hailakandi is the only subdivision in which there was any marked decrease in the average wages paid, and this was ascribed by the Deputy Commissioner to the more liberal grant of leave. The earnings of children form a substantial contribution to the incomes of their parents.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth-rate.

District.	Number of births.	Birth-rate per mille calculated on	
		Total coolie population.	Adult female population.
1	2	3	4
Cachar ...	3,499	29·6	93·1
Sylhet ...	4,733	33·2	106·5
Kamrup ...	126	38·1	121·6
Darrang ...	1,794	23·8	77·2
Nowgong ...	389	21·5	69·3
Sibsagar ...	4,326	28·2	90·3
Lakhimpur ...	3,909	25·8	82·5
Total for 1904-1905...	18,706	28·4	92·1
„ 1903-1904...	18,916	28·9	93·4

23. The birth-rate on tea gardens in Assam is given in the marginal table. The birth-rate per mille, calculated on the total coolie population, remains practically unchanged.

It compares unfavourably with the provincial birth-rate, which was 35·55 on the total population and 124·9 on the adult female population.

It is reported that on some gardens in the Cachar district it is customary to give a cash bonus to women after their confinement.

Death-rate.

24. For the total labour force the registered rate of mortality was 22·9, against 24·0 per mille in 1903-1904. This result is highly satisfactory, and though no doubt due in some measure to the healthiness of the year, may in part be attributed to greater care being taken by employers of newly-imported coolies and to improved medical and sanitary arrangements.

25. The marginal statement shows mortality among tea-garden coolies according to nationality. There is uniform improvement in the death-rate of coolies from all recruiting areas. But amongst Central Provinces coolies mortality is still excessive, and as noticed in last year's Resolution, is probably due to the change of diet which coolies from that province experience on coming to Assam. In Sibsagar mortality increased among all classes of coolies, except those recruited from Madras.

Mortality according to nationality.

Nationality.	Sex.	Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	Deaths among adults of both classes.	Ratio per mille of deaths to strength.
1	2	3	4	5
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	Men ...	145,370	1,503	21·84
	Women		1,672	
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	Men ...	167,304	1,882	23·36
	Women		2,126	
Central Provinces	Men ...	62,986	986	35·69
	Women		1,260	
Madras	Men ...	13,081	159	25·22
	Women		171	
Assam	Men ...	18,814	71	9·22
	Women		98	
Others *	Men ...	202	4	19·80
	Women		...	
Total	Men ...	203,599	4,588	22·53
	Women	203,688	5,247	25·76
Grand total	...	407,287	9,835	24·14

* Includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

Statement VIII.—Death-rate and causes of deaths among Act labourers.

26. The death-rate among Act labourers decreased from 38·1 to 34·2—an improvement shared by all districts except Sibsagar, where, owing probably to large importations, the death-rate increased from 31·8 to 33·3 per mille.

Deaths among non-Act labourers.

27. Among non-Act labourers the death-rate fell from 23·0 to 21·6. Darrang and Sibsagar alone showed slight increases.

Deaths among children.

28. The death-rate among children remained almost the same as in the previous year—20·9 against 20·4. But the registration of infant mortality is known to be defective.

29. The mean strength of the total Act labour force and the number of deaths from different causes for 1903-1904 and 1904-1905 are shown in the marginal statement. There was a decrease in the number of deaths from all causes. Dysentery, anæmia and diseases of the respiratory organs continue to account for the bulk of the mortality. There was a considerable decrease in deaths from all these causes.

	1903-1904.	(1904-1905.
Mean strength	85,792	82,144
Deaths from—		
Cholera	164	163
Diarrhœa	333	291
Dysentery...	751	542
Malarial fever	287	212
Anæmia	487	438
Respiratory diseases	577	538
Other causes	685	627
Total	3,384	2,811

Sick and destitute coolies.

30. Seven hundred and nine time-expired coolies were treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries, against 766 in the previous year.

In the two shelter huts in the Sylhet district—at Fenchuganj and Karimganj—43 persons were relieved, of whom 33 were *ex*-tea coolies and ten railway coolies. The total expenditure incurred was Rs. 253-10-3.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

31. Gardens are classed as unhealthy if the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole or for the Act or non-Act population taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent., the number of deaths from which the average is struck being not less than 10. The number of gardens on the unhealthy list for 1904-1905 was 6 out of a total of 776 gardens, against 5 out of a total of 781 gardens in the preceding year. The following table shows the gardens classed as unhealthy in each district, together with the rate of mortality of that portion of the labour force in respect of which the garden was unhealthy :—

District.	Unhealthy in respect of	Name of gardens.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia & cachexia.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sylhet ...	Act population ...	Burmacherra ...	128	10	78·1	...	1	1	1	1	1	5
Darrang ...	Act ,, ...	Gellahating ...	116	11	94·8	...	...	4	...	...	1	6
	Non-Act ,, ...	New Adabari ...	199	18	90·0	...	...	9	...	3	2	4
	Act ,, ...	Cinnamara ...	159	17	94·9	...	2	8	...	3	2	2
Sibsagar ...	Act ,, ...	Towkok ...	456	33	72·3	2	...	12	2	8	8	1
	Non-Act ,, ...	Barunsali ...	133	10	75·1	...	...	...	10	...	...	...

None of these gardens was on the unhealthy list in the previous year. In three out of the six gardens the excess of mortality over 7 per cent. was small.

On three gardens, dysentery was mainly responsible for the heavy mortality recorded. On Barnasali garden all the deaths were due to malarial fever and on Burmacherra to a variety of causes. The health of the labour force on this last-named garden has been bad for some years. The Manager has given considerable attention to improving the medical arrangements on the garden, but he has had to combat with imported diseases among arkati recruited coolies, a number of whom it was found necessary in 1903-1904 to repatriate under section 131.

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES AND PROSECUTIONS.

Statement IX.—Complaints by tea planters and garden coolies.

32. The number of cases recorded of complaints laid by coolies against Managers of ill-treatment unconnected with re-engagement (including 3 cases pending at the beginning of the year) fell from 103 to 18, but in the preceding year the number of cases was abnormal, owing to the fact that 70 cases arose out of a single incident in the Cachar district. None of the 18 cases were of an important character, and no less than 15 of them were decided against the complainants. Nine complaints (including three pending at the beginning of the year) of ill-treatment in order to compel re-engagement were lodged by coolies. These also were of an unimportant character, and the district reports furnish no details. Of the nine cases, seven were decided and two remained pending at the close of the year. In only one case was the decision in favour of the complainant. Five hundred and sixty-two applications for discharge certificates were filed. These were granted in 360 cases. Miscellaneous complaints (mainly under Act XIII) filed by coolies increased from 87 to 213. The only case of importance occurred at the Namdang colliery in the Lakhimpur district, where a coolie, who was suffering from enlarged spleen, died as the result of a beating inflicted by the mine foreman and a sardar. As there was nothing to show that the accused could have known that the deceased was suffering from enlarged spleen, the foreman was fined Rs. 250 and the sardar Rs. 15 under section 323, Indian Penal Code.

Turning now to cases in which Managers were the complainants, there was a satisfactory decrease in the number of criminal proceedings. In seven cases coolies were charged with unlawful assembly and rioting, and in three cases with assault or intimidation. None of the occurrences had serious consequences, though in two cases (one in the Nowgong and the other in the Lakhimpur district) Managers were forced to take refuge in their bungalows

In one case of the Jorhat subdivision, in which an Assistant Manager had very injudiciously taken a woman by the ear to force her to return to work and had been attacked by some thirty coolies, serious trouble might have ensued had he not been protected by a number of other coolies.

33. The number of deserters decreased from 2,960 to 2,733. The decrease was most noticeable in Cachar and Lakhimpur. In South Sylhet the number rose from 77 to 155, but only 8 warrants were taken out.

Statement X.—Desertions.

CHAPTER VII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

34. The number of gardens on the register at the beginning of the year was 781. In Sylhet, two were closed and one opened. In Nowgong three were abandoned and in Sibsagar two amalgamated. In Cachar, Kamrup, Darrang, and Lakhimpur there was no change.

Statement XI.—Inspections.

At the close of the year the number of gardens on the register was 776, of which 709 were liable to inspection. In Cachar, however, where the number of gardens is unusually large, biennial instead of annual inspection has been sanctioned tentatively, leaving to the Deputy Commissioner a wide discretion in placing gardens, the management of which is open to question, on a list of gardens to be inspected annually. This reduced the number of gardens actually liable to inspection during the year to 609, of which 599 were inspected.

35. The demand on account of capitation fees was Rs. 40,054-12-0 and Rs. 667-8-0 was outstanding from the previous year. Rupees 40,035-4-0 were collected during the year, leaving a balance of Rs. 692-4-0 to be realised.

Statement XII.—Capitation fees.

36. The relations between planters and the neighbouring villagers continued to be satisfactory.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers.

37. The area of Government land settled direct with time-expired coolies in the province increased from 111,706 acres to 120,390 acres. This area is exclusive of a large quantity of land held by coolies as sub-tenants of raiyats or mirasdars.

Colonization of ex-tea garden coolies.

38. The receipts of the combined Inland Labour Transport Funds of Bengal and Assam during the financial year 1904-1905 amounted to Rs. 84,932, against Rs. 72,382 in the preceding year, and the disbursements to Rs. 77,470, against Rs. 1,04,134, due to considerable economies which were effected. The result showed a balance of Rs. 7,462 instead of a deficit, as was anticipated. The Government of India have recently sanctioned the transfer to this fund of Rs. 22,000 from the Inland Labour Transport Fund of the Central Provinces.

Statement XIII.—Inland Labour Transport Fund.

The question of effecting further economies in order to restore the equilibrium of the fund has been referred to the Government of India. It has been decided that it is undesirable at the present juncture to deal finally with the matter.

39. In the course of the year a memorial was submitted to the Administration from a large and influential body of proprietors, urging the withdrawal of Act VI from the Surma Valley districts, and this question,—together with the question of expunging altogether sections 195 and 196 from the Act,—has been the subject of enquiry and consideration. A report on the subject has been submitted for the orders of the Government of India.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam,

B. C. ALLEN,

Offg. Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

STATEMENTS.

STATEMENT I.—PART A.—Statistics of the adult coolies employed under Act VI of 1901 on the Tea Estates in the Province of Assam during the year 1904-1905.

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1904-1905.							Deductions made during the year 1904-1905.												Number remaining at the end of the year 1904-1905.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Imported.		Otherwise than by importations.																			
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Number giving contracts under section 135.	Number giving contracts under section 131.	Received by transfer from other estates.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 9.	Transferred to other estates.	Deaths.	Desertions.	Cancelment under section 10.	Cancelments under sections 11, 119, 151(1), 153(1), 154 and 200.	Cancelment for permanent unfitness under section 131.	Cancelment under section 140(3).	Suspended under section 129.	Efflux of time, section 135.	Redemption, section 136.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Cachar	1,745	313	49	893	2	35	9	1,303	3,048	81	42	165	5	...	...	...	...	1,008	4	22	1,327	1,721	1,733	24·2
Sylhet	1,597	260	87	18	5	7	7	384	1,981	11	57	215	1	...	4	...	...	325	...	8	621	1,360	1,478	38·5
Total Surma Valley ...	3,342	573	136	913	7	42	16	1,687	5,029	92	99	380	6	...	4	...	...	1,333	4	30	1,948	3,081	3,211	30·8
Kamrup	22	...	2	...	...	...	...	2	24	...	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	17	19	157·8
Darrang	18,855	448	85	1,278	57	122	64	8,584	27,439	124	711	526	6	...	72	...	...	6,190	20	132	7,779	19,660	19,258	36·9
Nowgong	24,375	132	163	935	1,257	230	12	2,729	7,104	245	135	146	1	1	10	...	...	1,669	...	16	2,223	4,881	4,628	29·1
Sibsagar	21,676	529	1,515	818	3,219	111	40	6,232	27,908	111	653	746	3	...	46	...	...	8,231	3	641	10,454	17,454	19,565	33·3
Lakhimpur	36,036	1,186	1,495	3,108	9,050	137	62	15,107	51,143	131	1,210	931	5	...	61	...	...	13,668	4	243	16,253	34,890	35,463	34·1
Total Brahmaputra Valley ...	80,964	2,295	4,060	6,139	19,322	600	178	32,654	113,618	609	2,712	2,353	15	1	189	...	...	29,778	27	1,032	36,716	76,902	78,933	34·3
Total for 1904-1905 ...	84,306	2,868	4,196	7,112	19,329	642	194	34,341	118,647	701	2,811	2,733	21	1	193	...	...	31,111	31	1,062	38,664	79,983	82,144	34·2
,, ,, 1903-1904 ...	93,278	6,095	5,031	6,237	19,320	506	215	37,494	130,772	600	3,384	2,960	37	1	207	...	...	37,458	27	1,792	46,466	84,306	88,792	38·1

STATEMENT I.—PART B.—Statistics of the adult coolies (working and not working) living in garden lines or garden bastis, but not employed under Act VI of 1901, and coolie children.

District.		Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1904-1905. Number imported during the year.	Number added locally during the year.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 5.	Deductions made during the year 1904-1905. Number lost by death during the year.	Number lost by transfer or discharge or desertion during the year.	Number giving agreements under Act VI.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1904-1905.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cachar	Adults	60,858	1,031	5,567	6,598	67,456	1,358	4,011	896	6,264	70,192	70,025	19·3
	Children	47,379	423	3,950	4,373	51,752	912	5,705	...	6,617	45,135*	46,757	19·7
Sylhet	Adults	81,502	2,054	6,420	8,474	89,976	1,503	5,749	20	7,332	82,644	82,073	19·0
	Children	58,216	655	5,267	6,812	64,738	1,051	4,258	...	5,309	59,429	58,580	17·9
Surma Valley	Adults	151,360	3,085	11,987	15,072	166,432	2,920	9,760	916	13,596	152,836	152,098	19·1
	Children	105,595	1,078	9,817	10,895	116,490	1,963	10,693	...	12,656	103,834	104,729	18·7
Kamrup	Adults	2,474	33	630	663	3,137	58	829	...	907	2,230	2,357	24·6
	Children	934	7	178	185	1,119	47	166	...	213	906	913	59·9
Darrang	Adults	29,033	1,534	9,563	11,097	41,030	841	5,754	4,248	11,343	29,687	29,810	26·2
	Children	25,915	698	2,286	2,984	28,917	594	1,918	...	2,412	26,505	26,220	22·6
Nowgong	Adults	7,698	305	2,644	3,329	11,027	169	2,143	1,649	3,961	7,066	7,302	27·9
	Children	6,007	119	598	717	6,724	111*	330	...	647	6,077	6,042	19·3
Sibsagar	Adults	66,745	2,275	16,616	18,891	85,630	1,624	6,796	3,146	11,560	76,076	72,440	22·4
	Children	60,238	1,434	3,556	6,984	67,220	1,401	4,539	...	5,740	61,480	60,858	23·0
Lakhimpur	Adults	59,854	4,674	17,591	21,995	81,819	1,413	6,989	11,760	19,522	62,297	61,506	24·1
	Children	54,049	1,824	4,521	6,344	60,393	1,104	3,966	...	5,160	55,233	54,641	21·8
Brahmaputra Valley.	Adults	168,684	8,901	47,054	55,955	224,639	4,104	22,486	20,803	47,493	177,146	173,015	23·7
	Children	147,101	4,088	13,131	17,212	164,373	3,347	10,219	...	14,166	150,207	148,684	22·5
Total	Adults	310,044	11,940	59,041	71,027	381,071	7,924	32,446	21,619	60,889	330,182	325,113	21·6
	Children	252,736	5,189	22,948	28,107	280,863	5,310	2,222	...	29,732	254,131	253,443	10·9
Grand total		562,800	17,145	81,989	99,134	671,934	12,334	54,668	21,619	87,621	584,313	578,556	21·3
Total for 1903-1904		557,659	11,036	88,897	99,933	657,592	12,358	50,543	21,891	84,792	572,800	565,229	21·8

STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.		Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to column 10.	Percentage of column 9 to total labour force.
		Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.		9,498	8,162	17,660	61,122	68,054	129,176	70,620	76,216	146,836	51·90	33·80
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.		28,165	18,165	46,330	60,311	66,474	126,785	82,976	84,639	167,615	50·49	40·87
Central Provinces		6,889	8,268	17,827	21,632	23,657	45,289	31,191	31,925	63,116	50·58	15·39
Madras		14,810	1,728	2,538	4,092	5,287	10,379	6,472	6,675	13,057	50·58	3·19
Assam		604	505	1,132	13,540	4,668	18,208	14,164	5,116	19,280	26·53	4·70
Others*		12	4	16	127	78	205	139	82	221	37·10	05
Total of 1904-1905		43,315	36,345	79,153	101,924	168,258	330,182	205,562	204,653	410,165	49·88	100·0
" " 1903-1904		42,141	30,163	84,396	150,195	163,549	320,044	207,636	204,714	404,350	50·13	100·0

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

Nationality.	Imported by garden sardar.			Imported by contractors.			Total Act.			Total non-Act.			Total Act and non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	341	237	578	798	538	1,336	1,139	775	1,914	2,897	2,646	5,543	4,036	3,421	7,457
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas.	1,360	1,131	2,491	573	321	896	1,933	1,452	3,385	1,093	1,668	3,761	3,028	3,120	7,048
Central Provinces	535	426	961	357	196	553	892	622	1,484	1,400	1,091	2,491	2,292	1,813	3,975
Madras	80	56	136	56	54	110	136	140	276	226	171	397	362	311	673
Assam	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	66	1	67	66	1	67
Others*	...	...	...	2	1	3	2	1	3	22	5	27	24	6	30
Total of 1904-1905	2,316	1,850	4,166	1,788	1,080	2,868	4,104	2,990	7,064	6,604	5,582	12,186	10,708	8,442	19,150
" " 1903-1904	2,674	2,257	5,031	3,745	2,350	6,095	6,419	4,707	11,126	3,499	3,144	6,643	9,918	7,851	17,769

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT IV.—*Recruitment of Act Labourers.*

District.	Number of certificates granted for garden sardars.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars after examination of labourers.	Number of sardari coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under the Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts.		
							Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cachar	262	180	49	0·1	313	362	313	49	362
Sylhet	481(a)	308	87	0·1	260	347	260	87	347
Total Surma Valley	743	488	136	0·2	573	709	573	136	709
Kamrup	10	6	2	0·2	...	2	...	2	2
Darrang	1,364	1,020	885	0·6	448	1,333	448	885	1,333
Nowgong	277(b)	113	163	0·5	132	295	132	163	295
Sibsagar	1,746	1,358	1,515	0·8	529	2,044	529	1,515	2,044
Lakhimpur	2,132	1,668	1,495	0·7	1,186	2,681	1,186	1,495	2,681
Total Assam Valley	5,529	4,165	4,060	0·7	2,295	6,355	2,295	4,060	6,355
Total of 1904-1905	6,272	4,653	4,196	0·6	2,868	7,064	2,868	4,196	7,064
,, ,, 1903-1904	7,085	5,210	5,031	0·7	6,095	11,126	6,095	5,031	11,126

(a) This includes 40 permits granted to specially-employed garden sardars under section 90.
(b) This includes 59 ditto ditto ditto.

STATEMENT V.—*Debarkation Depôts.*

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	Number passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.		
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	1,816	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet	2	3,056	2,234	15	3	...	365	...	315 14 0	621 0 0	936 14 0
Kamrup	1	43	1,429	...	9	5	712	...	44 5 6	291 6 9	335 12 3
Darrang	1	3,565	2,986	...	5	17	1,136	...	660 11 0	1,560 2 2	2,220 13 2
Nowgong	1	799	778	74	6	2	696	...	149 1 0	423 5 6	572 6 6
Sibsagar	3	3,753	6,107	886	38	178	3,889	...	495 0 0	1,646 4 3	2,141 4 3
Lakhimpur	1	9,178	8,577	695	5	...	6,586	...	370 12 9	1,704 5 5	2,075 2 2
Total of 1904-1905 ...	9	24,209	22,111	1,670	66	202	13,384	...	2,035 10 3	6,246 8 1	8,282 2 4
,, ,, 1903-1904 ...	10	22,162	21,272	2,641	74	13	11,992	4	3,596 3 9	8,724 3 9	12,320 7 6

* Includes 1,352 coolies for Cachar district.

STATEMENT VI.—Fraudulent and irregular Recruitment.

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar	1	2	2	...	...	1	2	7
Sylhet ...	...	2	1	...	...	1	1	2
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang ...	3	17	10	4	4	2	18	31
Nowgong	...	3	1	2	...	...	3	4
Sibsagar	...	21	6	8	8	2	19	34
Lakhimpur	4	30	29	...	2	4	30	80
Total of 1904-1905 ...	8	75	40	19	14	10	73	130
,, ,, 1903-1904 ...	7	64	42	16	5	8	63	111

STATEMENT VII.—Repatriation of Labourers.

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated.					
		Under section 12 (section 10 or 11).	Under section 158 (section 131).	Under section 159.	Under section 160 (section 159 or 160).	Under section 161.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cachar	16	5	...	9	...	2	16
Sylhet	5	1	1	...	...	...	2
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	91	6	1	...	1	12	20
Nowgong	10	...	1	...	...	...	1
Sibsagar	58	3	14	...	...	9	26
Lakhimpur	88	5	58	...	...	22	85
Total of 1904-1905	268	20	75	9	...	45	150
,, ,, 1903-1904	339	41	155	70	...	24	290

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.					Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Fund.		
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the district or in the district.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 159.	Under section 161.	Total.
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
							Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	...	...	...	...	...	...	296 8 0	...	296 8 0
Sylhet	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	...	...
Kamrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	...	71	...	...	...	71	...	126 13 9	126 13 9
Nowgong	...	9	...	...	...	9	...	...	...
Sibsagar	...	27	2	2	1	32	...	...	...
Lakhimpur	...	2	...	1	...	3	...	...	...
Total of 1904-1905	...	112	2	3	1	118	296 8 0	126 13 9	423 5 9
,, ,, 1903-1904	...	45	3	1	...	49	1,114 9 3	73 1 6	1,187 10 9

STATEMENT VIII.—Deaths among all Classes of Labourers.

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhœa.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Ammia of cooties & anchylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	Act	1,733	4	8	6	8	4	8	4	42	24·2
	Non-Act adults ...	70,025	86	97	103	209	192	220	450	1,357	19·3
	Children	46,757	60	205	115	105	30	100	207	912	19·7
	Total adults ...	71,758	90	105	109	217	196	228	454	1,399	19·4
Sylhet	Act	1,478	1	9	9	3	13	8	14	57	38·5
	Non-Act adults ...	82,073	91	214	230	229	234	165	400	1,563	19·0
	Children	58,502	54	136	127	274	72	64	324	1,051	17·9
	Total adults ...	83,551	92	223	239	232	247	173	414	1,620	19·3
Kamrup	Act	19	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	3	157·8
	Non-Act adults ...	2,357	1	4	10	25	3	1	14	58	24·6
	Children	923	1	3	4	24	...	...	15	47	50·9
	Total adults ...	2,376	1	5	11	25	3	1	15	61	25·6
Darrang	Act	19,258	43	67	120	66	144	135	136	711	36·9
	Non-Act adults ...	29,810	41	72	110	112	153	150	203	841	28·2
	Children	26,220	...	30	126	131	50	63	174	594	22·6
	Total adults ...	49,068	84	139	230	178	297	285	339	1,552	31·0
Nowgong	Act	4,628	6	7	11	13	29	19	50	135	29·1
	Non-Act adults ...	7,362	10	12	10	21	21	16	79	169	22·9
	Children	6,042	...	6	18	13	2	3	67	111	18·3
	Total adults ...	11,990	16	19	21	34	50	35	129	304	25·3
Sibsagar	Act	19,565	53	89	149	30	75	113	142	653	33·3
	Non-Act adults ...	72,410	172	176	236	111	179	364	386	1,624	22·4
	Children	60,858	40	143	277	259	60	249	373	1,401	23·0
	Total adults ...	91,975	227	265	385	141	254	477	528	2,277	24·7
Lakhimpur	Act	35,463	54	110	246	92	173	255	286	1,216	34·1
	Non-Act adults ...	51,076	76	141	235	102	175	329	354	1,412	23·1
	Children	54,641	18	111	243	213	56	131	422	1,194	21·8
	Total adults ...	86,539	130	251	481	194	348	584	634	2,622	27·1
Grand total	Act	82,144	163	291	542	242	438	538	627	2,811	34·2
	Non-Act adults ...	325,113	477	716	934	809	957	1,245	1,886	7,024	21·6
	Children	253,443	173	654	910	1,109	270	612	1,582	5,310	20·9
	Total adults ...	407,257	640	1,007	1,476	1,021	1,395	1,783	2,513	9,835	24·1
	Total Labour force ...	660,700	813	1,661	2,386	2,130	1,665	2,395	4,095	15,145	22·9

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by Tea-garden Coolies and by Tea Planters.

	By coolies against Managers.				By Managers against coolies.					
	Violence, intimidation or persuasion to leave without reference to re-engagement.	Violence, intimidation or oppressive treatment to compel re-engagement.	Applications for discharge certificates.	Others.	Non-fulfilment of contract (by absence, desertion, etc.).	For failure of garden sardars to return to duty.	For enticing coolies.	Unlawful assembly or arrest.	Assault or intimidation.	Others.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number of complaints or petitions received during the year.	15	6	530	206	1,170	25	33	7	3	21
Number of complaints or petitions pending from the previous year.	3*	3	12	7	135*	3	...	...	...	10*
Total	18	9	542	213	1,105	28	33	7	3	31
Number dealt with criminally and decided—										
For complainant	...	1	...	3	6	...	2	6	3	6
Against complainant	7	...	...	13	58	1	7	1	...	13
Number of persons fined	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	10	...	1
,, ,, imprisoned	...	...	...	3	3	...	3	25	6	3
Number dealt with under Act VI of 1901 and decided—										
For complainant	...	...	100	11	303	...	12	...	...	...
Against complainant	1	...	51	12	275	25	6	...	...	3
Number of persons fined	...	...	...	...	3	...	2	...	...	...
,, ,, imprisoned	...	...	...	...	244	...	9	...	...	...
Number dealt with under Act XIII of 1859 and decided—										
For complainant	...	...	6	1	29	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	...	...	1	...	390	...	...	...	...	3
Number of persons imprisoned	...	...	...	...	45	...	...	...	...	...
Number dealt with executively and decided—										
For complainant	2	...	254	87	...	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	7	6	131	76	...	...	...	...	...	...

*Revised figures.

STATEMENT X.—Statement of Desertions among Adult Labourers under Act VI of 1901.

Subdivision.		Number of desertions.	Percentage of desertions on mean strength.	Number of warrants issued for the arrest of deserters.	Number arrested.	Number convicted.	Number punished with imprisonment.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar ...	Sadr	128	8·06	38	23	23	23
	Hailakandi ...	37	19·50	7	7	7	7
	North Sylhet ...	8	5·44	...	...	...	...
Sylhet ...	Karimganj ...	40	10·05	35	9	9	9
	South Sylhet ..	155	18·61	8	2	1	1
	Habiganj ...	12	11·88	...	...	...	...
Kamrup ...	Sadr ...	4	21·05	4	3	3	3
Darrang ...	Sadr ...	420	2·48	161	115	97	46
	Mangaldai ...	106	4·53	4	2	2	2
Nowgong ...	Sadr ...	146	3·15	23	43	34	38
	Sadr ...	277	2·75	24	24	19	19
Sibsagar ...	Jorhat ...	318	4·36	39	20	17	17
	Golaghat ...	151	6·77	8	8	8	8
Lakhimpur ...	Sadr ...	834	2·70	48	47	44	43
	North Lakhimpur ...	97	2·08	26	25	25	25
Total of 1904-1905		2,713	3·32	425	228	293	241
,, ,, 1903-1904		2,960	3·33	378	315	248	215

STATEMENT XI.—Inspections.

District.	Number of gardens employing Act labour.	Number of non-Act gardens employing more than 50 labourers.	Total number of gardens liable to inspection.	Number inspected once.	Number inspected twice.	Number inspected thrice.	Number inspected four times.	Total inspected.	Number of inspections made by Deputy Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Civil Surgeons.	Number of inspections made by other officials.	Total number of inspections made.	Number of gardens which submitted returns.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cachar	58	122	180*	80	...	...	...	80	70	10	...	...	80	115
Sylhet	46	76	122	122	...	...	...	122	20	101	1	...	122	123
Kamrup	2	12	14	11	...	...	...	11	11	...	...	...	11	13
Darrang	72	13	85	78	3	...	...	81	45	...	11	28	84	85
Nowgong	29	5	34†	32	1	...	...	33	20	...	14	...	34	35
Sibsagar	118	27	145	143	1	...	...	144	23	99	2	21	145	145
Lakhimpur	114	15	129	125	3	...	...	128	58	...	10	63	131	130
Total of 1904-1905	439	270	709	591	8	...	...	599	247	210	38	112	607	647
,, ,, 1903-1904	431	268	719	696	15	...	...	711	281	265	66	114	726	724

* Includes 65 out-gardens. † One garden closed during the year.

STATEMENT XII.—Demand and Collection of Capitation Fees under section 117 of Act VI of 1901.

District.	Demand for the year.		Arrears from previous year outstanding.	Gross demand.	Total realised.	Balance outstanding.
	Number of labourers for whom fee is payable.	Total demand.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar	3,775	943 12 0	16 8 0	960 4 0	879 8 0	80 12 0
Sylhet	2,986	739 0 0	399 4 0	1,138 4 0	799 0 0†	340 0 0
Kamrup	35	8 12 0	5 8 0	14 4 0	10 0 0	4 4 0
Darrang	38,174	9,543 8 0	...	9,543 8 0	9,263 0 0‡	280 4 0
Nowgong	8,625	2,156 4 0	...	2,156 4 0	2,156 4 0	...
Sibsagar	36,735	9,183 12 0	246 4 0	9,430 0 0	9,446 12 0§	...
Lakhimpur	69,919	17,479 12 0	...	17,479 12 0	17,479 12 0	...
Total	160,219	40,054 12 0	667 8 0	40,722 4 0	40,035 4 0	687 4 0

* The figures in this column represent the number of labourers on which the fee for the half-year was payable.

† Include excess collection of Rs. 0-12-0.

‡ Excludes Rs. 12-4 paid in advance in previous year.

§ Rs. 16-12-0 paid in excess.

STATEMENT XIII.—Showing the Receipts and Expenditure of the Inland Labour Transport Fund in Bengal and Assam during the year 1904-1905.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.	Heads.	Assam figures.	Bengal figures.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Contractors' license fees under section 13 ...	...	1,850 0 0	1,850 0 0	Salaries of depôt establishments, including Assistant Surgeons, Hospital Assistants, allowances to Hospital Assistants, compounders, and dressers, clerks, servants, travelling allowances and compensation for clearness of provisions,	6,493 5 3	4,046 9 6	10,540 1 9
Recruiters' license fees under section 24 ...	...	3,000 0 0	3,000 0 0				
Registration fees under section 121 ...	...	6,158 0 0	6,158 0 0				
Rates under section 117...	42,439 4 9	...	42,439 4 0	Supplies and services, including expenses during the prevalence of epidemics and inoculation under grants for medical purposes, diet of patients, clothing and bedding, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty construction and repairs, postage charges, telegrams, purchase and repair of furniture, printing at private presses, stationery purchased in the country, rents, rates, and taxes, and miscellaneous under Hospitals and Dispensaries, contingent charges.	8,235 14 8	234 4 9	8,470 3 5
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	1,453 5 9	...	1,453 5 9				
Medical examination fees	464 0 0	...	464 0 0				
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals ...	242 4 6	...	242 4 6				
Fines and miscellaneous...	581 5 4	...	581 5 4	Grants to dispensaries ...	3,480 0 0	...	3,480 0 0
Diet, etc., charges recovered	2,974 15 4	...	2,974 15 4	Salaries under 28—Scientific, etc., including Inspectors, Travelling Inspector of Immigrants, Emigrant Agents and Assistant Surgeons, etc.	2,958 3 9	17,140 12 10	20,099 0 7
Fees for license of inland steamers and native boats under section 90.	...	1,612 4 0	1,612 4 0	Clerks and servants ...	8,549 11 8	6,919 11 1	15,469 6 1
Capitation fees ...	...	1,187 10 0	1,187 10 0	Travelling allowance ...	5,664 0 9	3, 89 5 10	8,754 0 7
Fines	...	125 0 0	125 0 0	Compensation for clearness of provisions,	...	...	...
Sales of sold stores and materials	12 9 3	...	12 9 3	Allowances for registering coolies.	...	550 4 0	550 4 0
Miscellaneous ...	...	157 7 6	157 7 6	House rent allowance ...	224 0 0	...	224 0 0
Surplus transferred from the Central Provinces	22,000 0 0	...	22,000 0 0	Fees for inspecting tea gardens.	596 0 0	...	596 0 0
Contribution from Provincial to Local ...	500 0 0	...	500 0 0	Miscellaneous, including medical examination charges, postage, telegrams, printing and stationery, share cost of controlling and audit office, miscellaneous under "contingencies" (26—Scientific, etc.), printing at private presses under Stationery and printing, burial charges of paupers, charges for relief of distress, cost of repatriating invalided labourers and petty construction and repairs under 32.—Miscellaneous and pensions under 39—Superannuation, etc.	5,315 12 0	3,464 14 9	8,780 10 9
Deposits and Advances...	274 0 0	...	274 0 0				
				Refunds...	199 8 3	54 2 6	253 10 9
				Contributions on account of treasury establishment.	...	140 14 5	140 14 5
				Deposits and Advances ...	275 0 0	26 2 0	301 2 0
				Deficiencies (*i.e.*, excess of payments over receipts transferred from Bengal) to Assam.	21,577 0 9	—21,577 0 9	...
Total	70,841 12 2	14,090 5 6	84,932 1 8	Total	65,378 1 8	14,090 5 6	77,469 7 2
Opening balance ...	...	...	...	Closing balance	*7,462 10 6	...	7,462 10 0
Grand total	70,841 12 2	14,090 5 6	84,932 1 8	Grand total	70,841 12 2	14,090 5 6	84,932 1 8

SHILLONG : Printed and published by B. HILL, Superintendent, Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat Printing Office : (F. & M.) No. 518—280—6-11-1905.

00132912

Digitized with financial assistance from
Government of Maharashtra
on 01 February, 2020